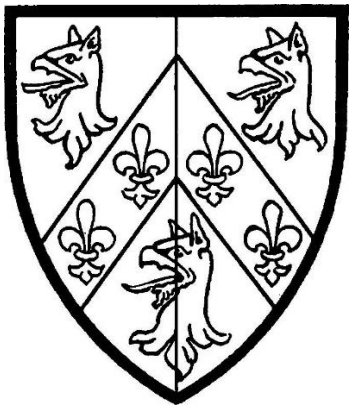
Theology DPhil Thesis:
Towards a Catholic Epistemology



Gregory Richard Peter Stacey

Trinity College,

Oxford

Short Abstract

In this thesis, I develop a Catholic analysis of faith and reason, drawing on insights from a movement in contemporary analytic philosophy: Reformed Epistemology. In my first chapter, I explain that despite criticism from Catholic philosophers, Reformed Epistemology provides a broadly salutary model of faith. Inspired by Reformed Epistemology, I develop a further model ("Counter-Reformed Epistemology") which is philosophically defensible, and which accords well with a set of theological desiderata for such a model drawn from the Church's dogmatic teaching about faith. These desiderata include divine faith consisting of propositional assent to divine revelation which is (at least, in paradigm instances) perfectly certain, rationally tenacious and freely chosen. I argue that CRE accounts for these properties of faith better than competing analyses of faith advanced by Catholic philosophers. In the second chapter, I expand my sketch of CRE, to show how it can account for the possibility of "implicit" Catholic faith in those who non-culpably fail to believe in the gospel. In doing so, I also compare CRE to the insights of Rahner and von Balthasar, who are important representatives of modern approaches to "fundamental theology". In the remainder of my thesis, I aim to show that CRE has considerable precedent in Catholic theological tradition. In successive chapters, I argue that Augustine, Aquinas and Newman all advanced religious epistemologies which to different degrees bear considerable similarities to CRE, engaging with various modern interpretations of their work. The support of authors in the tradition should lend plausibility to my model from a Catholic perspective, meaning that Catholics with "basic" belief in divine revelation can be fairly confident that their belief is epistemically fitting. In all, I argue that Reformed Epistemology provides the resources to develop a model of faith that accords well with a traditional Catholic understanding of faith and reason.

Long Abstract

Although it cemented itself in academic consciousness three decades ago, Reformed Epistemology remains among the most important currents of thought to emerge from the late-twentieth century revival in analytic philosophy of religion. In essence, the movements proponents (notably, Alvin Plantinga and William Alston) sought to transform the criteria on which religious beliefs were to be judged rational.[1] According to certain "evidentialist" strains of thought, which were dominant in mid-twentieth century philosophy of religion, a religious belief can only be held rationally if it is based on some other belief or set of beliefs which are non-religious in nature. Often, these "evidentialists" held to some form of "classical foundationalism", which claims that only beliefs in a priori truths and truths arrived at by introspection, perhaps together with perceptual or memorial beliefs can be "properly basic"- i.e. rationally held without grounding in further beliefs. In other words, to remain rational, a believer's faith must be grounded in "evidence" from the deliverances of logical intuition, introspection or sense perception for the truth of propositions which she believes. [2] Assuming such epistemic conditions on religious belief, it becomes relatively difficult for believers to rationally maintain their faith. If believers wish to maintain the rich and varied sets of beliefs typical of religious "orthodoxy", they will likely have to provide many complex lines of argument for their various beliefs, whilst rebutting relevant defeaters. As Plantinga points out, the maintenance of faith which is based on "evidence"- particularly given a modern Western climate of religious scepticism- is likely to be psychologically taxing, and risks rendering what ought to be among one's deepest existential commitments just another piece of rational extrapolation. Thus, the faith of an evidentialist is "whimsical at best, and unlikely to delight the person concerned".

Plantinga et. al, however, felt able to reject evidentialism and its attendant difficulties. Firstly, as with the "verification principle" which had plagued efforts at philosophy of religion in the earlier part of the century, they noted that classical foundationalism was perhaps internally inconsistent, since it is difficult to show by appeal to empirical data/logically necessarily truths that only beliefs immediately arrived at by empirical observation or intuited as logical axioms are rationally held as "basic beliefs". Plantinga noted that in other settings where sceptics challenge the rationality of belief (such as in the case of belief in other minds, the reliability of sense-perception/induction), it is often conceded that even though believers lack "evidence" for their beliefs acceptable to sceptics, they are nonetheless perfectly rational. Similarly, then, the Reformed Epistemologists suggested that- at least, if the relevant religious system is true- religious beliefs might be held rationally in a "basic" manner (i.e. without being supported by other beliefs whatsoever). Moreover, they suggested that since there is no "neutral" epistemic position from which to judge which basic beliefs are "properly basic", different individuals or communities might have their own intellectual standards which- for all they can tell- they are justified in holding. Indeed, Plantinga argues that the basic belief in the truth of theism and certain fundamental tenets of Christianity might also possess "externalist" justification (or even "warrant": the property which makes true belief knowledge) if the relevant belief is in fact true, since God would likely design faculties aimed at the reliable production of true, basically held religious beliefs in their environment.[3]

---

[1] Cf. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (ed) Faith and Rationality (London, University of Notre Dame Press, 1983); Alvin Plantinga, Warranted Christian Belief (Oxford, OUP 2000); William Alston, Perceiving God (London, Cornell University Press 1991).

[2] Alvin Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God" in Faith and Rationality p.69.

[3] In Plantinga's view, a belief is warranted iff it is "produced…by cognitive faculties functioning properly…in an envornoment which is appropriate…according to a design plan which is successfully aimed at truth" (Warranted Christian Belief p.156).

One might expect that Catholic philosophers would have reacted favourably to the project of Reformed Epistemology, since in addition to the obvious intellectual benefits for any form of Christianity, Catholics have a strong tradition in philosophical theology. Further, Catholic doctrine dictates that articles of faith are (or, ideally should be) rationally believed with a very high degree of credence and "rational tenacity" (i.e. indefeasibility), which as various Neo/Scholastic authors had noted, did not fit easily with "evidentialism". However, the immediate Catholic reaction to Reformed Epistemology was largely negative, with the latter at worst viewed merely as a species of Protestant fideism which lacked confidence in the project of natural theology endorsed by Vatican I.[4] At best, Reformed Epistemology was viewed as deficient in a number of respects, being insufficiently "internalist" viz. justification, insufficiently rationally tenacious and providing little scope for belief being an act of free choice. To my knowledge, since the publication of the above responses to Reformed Epistemology, there has been no attempt at a sustained evaluation of the latter from a Catholic perspective. Whilst some Catholic philosophers/theologians (particularly those writing on Aquinas) write more favourably of the movement, others remain apparently trenchant critics. Moreover, it should be noted that all of the responses listed above are really philosophical rather than theological. Recent Catholic treatments of the "analysis of faith" written from a theological or "systematic" perspective sometimes fail to engage with Reformed Epistemology, even when apparently aware of Plantinga's wider philosophical theology.[5]

The first chapter of my thesis presents a philosophical and theological exposition of "Reformed Epistemology" and an analysis of the objections brought against it by Catholics, laying the groundwork for my defence of an adapted version of the former. I use these criticisms, together with doctrinal definitions about the properties of "divine faith" to form a list of desiderata for the former in Catholic models of faith and reason. A Catholic analysis of faith should render faith justified in a moderate "internalist" sense, perfectly certain and "rationally tenacious" (i.e. rationally indefeasible) and the result of a free choice to believe. I suggest that although "Reformed Epistemology" as construed by Plantinga and Alston fails to meet some of these desiderata, it can be adapted to do so. I illustrate this by elucidating my own model of faith and reason: "Counter-Reformed Epistemology", which I defend from potential philosophical objections. By contrast, I argue that the alternatives to Reformed Epistemology proposed by Catholic philosophers fail to meet the desiderata for an analysis of faith, suggesting that Catholics might do well to re-examine their position on Reformed Epistemology.

In my second chapter, I go on to examine a potential defeater for my proposed model of faith and reason- namely, its apparent incompatibility with the thesis of "Anonymous Christianity" which according to Karl Rahner was given magisterial endorsement at the Second Vatican Council. Indeed, an analysis of the possibility of the latter is arguably something lacking from many analyses of faith given by Catholic philosophers of religion. To this end, I examine in detail Rahner's proposed mechanism by which conscious non-believers possess "implicit" faith in Christ and the Church. I argue that although Rahner's mechanism is broadly compatible with my model of divine faith, it nevertheless remains open to philosophical and theological objection. Drawing on the work of

[4] On this initial, negative response, see the articles collected in Linda Zagzebski (ed) Rational faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed epistemology (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press 1993) and Leonard A Kennedy (ed) Thomistic Papers IV (Houston, Center for Thomistic Studies 1988).

[5] E.g. Avery Dulles The Assurance of Things Hoped For: A Theology of Christian Faith (Oxford, OUP, 1994); Gerald O'Collins Rethinking Fundamental Theology (Oxford, OUP, 2011); J.T. Lamont Divine Faith (Aldershot, Ashgate 2004).

Rahner's vociferous critic Hans-Urs von Balthasar, I then suggest an explanation of "anonymous" faith in Christ which is compatible with my model, avoids the difficulties with Rahner's theory, and which seems plausibly consistent with at least some varieties of modern atheism. In addition to rebutting a defeater for my project, this chapter contributes to my overall aim in two ways. Firstly, it aims to clear up a lacuna in the account of faith given in the first chapter by explaining how Catholics who apparently lack "basic" belief in propositions of faith may still possess saving faith. Secondly, it tries to bring my project into conversation with two of the major analyses of faith given by Catholic theologians after the Second Vatican Council, and notes some of the similarities between CRE and the religious epistemologies of Rahner and Balthasar.

The third chapter of my thesis begins the process of evaluating CRE from the perspective of the Catholic tradition, by aiming to find historical antecedents of my view in the work of influential theologians. This exercise will help develop my views and ensure that my project is grounded in tradition, as is proper in Catholic theology. In this chapter I examine the contested legacy of St. Augustine. Augustine is obviously of immense significance to Western Christian orthodoxy, and this is no less true of his position on the relationship between faith and reason. However, the evaluation of the latter is hotly contested in the literature, with many urging that Augustine was an "evidentialist",[6] although proponents of views closer to Reformed Epistemology also claim him as an ally.[7] Having examined Augustine's position and the arguments of both parties, I suggest that although there is some textual evidence for reading Augustine as an evidentialist, Augustine probably held a view closer to CRE. This is evident both from explicit statements which Augustine makes about the role which evidence plays in grounding faith, and also from his developing theory of grace which is in its latter stages hard to square with an evidentialist position.

The fourth chapter of my thesis continues to defend the thesis that something close to "Reformed Epistemology" is present in Catholic tradition, by examining the work of arguably the most important Catholic theology, St. Thomas Aquinas. A growing literature already testifies to the similarity of Aquinas' view to those of Plantinga et al.[8] I shall (positively) evaluate this literature, partly by way of comparison with earlier, Neo-Scholastic interpretations of Thomas, aiming to reconcile the "Reformed" reading of Aquinas with statements in his works which seem to support "evidentialism". As recent commentators have acknowledged, it is ultimately clear from Aquinas' explicit statements that faith need not be grounded in evidence acceptable to classical foundationalism. Rather, believers can rationally hold, as a properly basic belief, that God has revealed Himself through Christ and the Church. However, this has led some scholars to suggest that on Aquinas' account, faith only enjoys "internalist" justification by being grounded in naturally perceptible evidence. I contest this reading of Aquinas, by comparing his analysis of the "light of faith" which causes such basic belief to a recent epistemological position termed "Phenomenal Conservatism". I suggest that Phenomenal Conservatism shows Aquinas could maintain that belief that God has revealed Himself through the Church need not be anchored in evidence acceptable to classical foundationalism, whilst also possessing internalist justification.

---

[6] E.g. Norman Kretzmann "Faith seeks, understanding finds- Augustine's charter for Christian philosophy in Thomas Flint (ed) Christian Philosophy (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1990); Avery Dulles The Assurance of Things Hoped For p.26.

[7] E.g. J.T. Lamont, Divine Faith; Paul A. MacDonald "The Epistemology of Faith in Augustine and Aquinas" in Augustine and Philosophy, Philip Cary (ed.) (Lanham: Lexington Books 2010).

[8] Particularly, James "The Epistemic Status of Belief in Thomas Aquinas" (PhD diss., Saint Louis University, 2008).

The fifth chapter of my thesis will conclude my examination of traces of the "Reformed" tradition with an examination of the work of John Henry Newman. Newman's work is of interest because the elements of his account of the relationship between faith and reason are rather novel within the Catholic tradition. In particular, his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* develops a religious epistemology which, on one reading, offer an alternative to CRE which apparently meets many of the dogmatic desiderata outlined in my first chapter. The most apt interpretations of Newman's position Newman's thought, however, place his understanding of faith somewhat closer to CRE. Newman's position is partly evidentialist, in contrast to the "Reformed" position I advocate, since Newman adopted elements of a Scholastic consensus amongst contemporary Catholic theologians, who required an evidence-based "judgement of credibility" to precede a rational act of faith. However, following several commentators I argue that Newman does indeed adopt a position similar to that of "Reformed Epistemology" in his "argument" for the existence of God from conscience.[9] Further, after becoming Catholic, Newman's exposure to Scholastic accounts of faith caused him to believe that although an examination of evidence for the "judgement of credibility" preceding faith was required for faith to be rational, the assent of divine faith itself is not discursive. That is, one believes Catholic doctrine because it is revealed by God, without this latter belief being grounded in apologetic arguments that God has so revealed Himself.

In all, my thesis aims at the rehabilitation of Reformed Epistemology, in order to construct a model of divine faith which accounts for the properties ascribed to faith by Church doctrine better than current alternative theories. In doing so, I hope to contribute both to the practice of Catholic philosophical theology, and the wider endeavours of "analytic" theologians to bring contemporary philosophical analysis to bear on theological problems, whilst remaining engaged with the long tradition of Christian scholarship.

[9] Gerrard Hughes, "Conscience" in Ian Ker (ed) The Cambridge Companion to Newman (Cambridge, CUP, 2009).

Acknowledgments

In pursuing this project, I have relied extensively on the generous help and advice of my supervisors, Prof. Brian Leftow and Dr. William Wood. The critical advice of Dr. Tim Mawson, Dr. Nicholas Waghorn, Prof. Mark Edwards and Prof. Carol Harrison has also, I hope, borne fruit here. The material has additionally benefitted indirectly from conversation with many of my theological peers; particularly Nandan Mani Ratnam, Samuel Filby, Martin Smith, Ben Page and all of the "Thursday Theologians". Equally important to the completion of this project has been the companionship of Oxonian friends who patiently listened to my animadversions about an abstruse thesis peripheral to their own academic interests. In particular I have trespassed on the time of Guy Brindley, Lucy Bowker, Aurora Griffin, Benedict Coleridge, Thomas Robertson, Fran Ciccotti, Patrick Hollebon, Maura Valenti, Philippa Stacey and many members of Trinity College Choir and Chapel. In the waning days of my thesis, Katharine Head proved a kindly light among the "changes and chances of this fleeting world". Throughout my thesis, I have benefitted most from the patient support of my fiancée, Alexandra Huxtable. Lastly, however, I acknowledge those without whom I would never have had the opportunity to pursue further study. Particular thanks go to His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols for his extremely generous personal contribution towards funding my research. Yet my deepest gratitude is to my parents, Simon and Carmel Stacey, and my grandmothers Margery Keane and Rhona Stacey (*requiat in pace*).

To all of those above I give my deep thanks, as also to the Author who makes all thought and writing possible. "Blessed be God, in his angels and in His saints".

Contents

Chapter Three: Augustine on Faith and Reason

Chapter Four: Aquinas on Faith and Evidence

Introduction

1.0 Reformed Epistemology and Its Critics

Despite its relative youth, Reformed Epistemology occupies an important place in modern analytic discussion of the rationality of faith. The arguments of Alvin Plantinga, William Alston and others have transformed the manner in which philosophers and theologians think about the relationship between faith and reason. In the mid-twentieth century, even those philosophers not seduced by the lures of Verificationism were often inclined to consider Christian beliefs irrational, perhaps even from a believer's perspective. The thought that Christian faith was irrational was often based on a combination of what Plantinga described as "evidentialism" and "classical foundationalism".[10] "Evidentialism" claims that to be rational, beliefs must be grounded in appropriate evidence.[11] Classical foundationalism, meanwhile, holds that only beliefs which are the deliverances of *a priori* intuition, introspection or sense perception can be rationally held without support from further beliefs ("properly basic"). When these claims are combined, they mandate that in order for Christian belief to be rational, it must be based on evidence which is acceptable to classical foundationalism: i.e. ultimately grounded in beliefs formed by intuition, etc. Traditional apologetic arguments from "natural theology" or alleged miracles had claimed that the existence of God was rendered at least probable by evidence acceptable to classical foundationalists. However, such arguments were widely regarded as flawed and subject to counter-evidence; say, from the existence and magnitude of evil.

Yet from the early 1980s, Reformed Epistemologists sought to argue that Christian beliefs can be rational even if lacking "evidential" support by being grounded in beliefs acceptable to classical foundationalism.[12] Classical foundationalism, they argued, is plausibly self-defeating, and renders irrational many quotidian beliefs which seem epistemically permissible. Belief in the existence of other minds, for example, is not underpinned by any strong philosophical argument which takes as its

[10] Alvin Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God", in Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, ed. *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1983), 24-59.
[11] Of course, not all evidentialists are classical foundationalists. As I explain below, Plantinga and Alston can both be characterised as "evidentialists", in that they allow that basic Christian beliefs are grounded in non-propositional evidence.
[12] The *locus classicus* for Reformed Epistemology is Plantinga and Wolterstorff, ed. *Faith and Rationality*.

premises beliefs acceptable on classical foundationalism. Yet if classical foundationalism is rejected, it is not obvious which beliefs can rationally be held without support from other beliefs ("properly basic"). Consequently, Plantinga et al. suggested that perhaps religious beliefs might also be properly basic, so far as believers can tell. Accordingly, Reformed Epistemologists typically argue that basic Christian beliefs possess- or may well possess- "internalist" justification.[13] Subsequently, Reformed Epistemologists also argued that if Christianity is true, basic Christian beliefs likely enjoy "externalist" justification or "warrant" (that property which when added to true belief suffices for knowledge).[14] In sum, Reformed Epistemologists argue that basic Christian beliefs are *prima facie* justified in an internalist sense, and (if Christianity is true) also in an externalist sense. Since Christian believers *ipso facto* believe that Christianity is true, they are entitled to believe that their beliefs meet both internalist and externalist conditions on justification.

Reaction to Reformed Epistemology was critical from many philosophers, including Catholics.[15] A typical worry was that if belief in God or trust in Christian sources of revelation could be properly basic, virtually any belief could turn out to be justified in an internalist sense, and warranted if true. Furthermore, Catholic philosophers often perceived Reformed Epistemology as an attack on the traditional arguments of natural theology and apologetics which had received official or quasi-official Magisterial endorsement since the nineteenth century. Since Plantinga characterised Aquinas as a philosopher who embraced evidentialism and classical foundationalism, they likewise perceived Reformed Epistemology as incompatible with a Thomistic understanding of faith and reason.

Notably, Catholic philosophers also found Reformed Epistemology wanting on theological grounds, because it failed to account for certain properties ascribed to faith by Catholic dogma. According to the Church's Magisterium, propositions believed with "divine" faith are believed with perfect certainty (i.e. the highest level of credence) and rational tenacity (indefeasibility by rational argument). Further, the assent of faith is supposed to be the result of a free choice to believe. Yet

[13] For a belief to be justified in an internalist sense is, roughly, for it to appear epistemically appropriate from the believer's perspective. I characterise internalism more precisely below.
[14] Cf. In particular, Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christ Belief* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).
[15] E.g. Linda Zagzebski ed. *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1993) and Leonard A Kennedy (ed) *Thomistic Papers IV* (Houston, Center for Thomistic Studies 1988).

Reformed Epistemology apparently struggles to ascribe these properties to faith. Firstly, since the justification accorded by Reformed Epistemology to properly basic belief is only *prima facie*, it appears that properly basic beliefs may be irrational if held in the face of powerful defeaters. Accordingly, even if Christian beliefs are properly basic, they might remain defeasible (and hence, not perfectly rationally tenacious), suggesting that Reformed Epistemology gives at best an inadequate account of faith's rational grounding. Moreover, Plantinga and Alston's models for the formation of basic religious beliefs contain little room for a free decision to embrace belief in the gospel. Thus, even if Reformed Epistemology is philosophically defensible, it was contended that it fails to deliver a model of faith and reason which accounts for the distinctive character of faith as conceived by Catholic tradition.

2.0 Towards A Catholic Epistemology

Despite the initial rejection of Reformed Epistemology by Catholic philosophers, some have more recently looked more favourably on this attempt to explain how faith might be rational.[16] In this thesis, I wish to argue that Reformed Epistemology presents an analysis of faith and reason which is basically favourable to two important projects within Catholic theology. The first project is an attempt to show how belief in orthodox Christian doctrine can be rational. The second project, sometimes discussed by Scholastic theologians as the "problem of faith", is the attempt to explain how orthodox Christian belief can evince the properties typically ascribed to it by the Augustinian understanding of faith. This endeavour is to some extent separable from the first project, since contemporary Christian philosophers who argue that orthodox Christian belief can be rational often suggest that faith lacks some or all of the properties traditionally ascribed to it by Catholic tradition. [17]

My argument will be that whilst Catholic critiques of Reformed Epistemology have some force, the insights of Plantinga and Alston can be used to construct an analysis of faith compatible with the Catholic understanding of faith. I term this analysis "Counter-Reformed Epistemology". More

[16] Mainly in light of a re-reading of Aquinas' religious epistemology. Cf. Chapter Four, below.
[17] Thus Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 228 , for example, rejects demands for faith to include certain assent to creedal propositions (i.e. assent with a perfect degree of credence). Some recent accounts of faith even deny that faith necessarily includes propositional assent- cf. Daniel Howard-Snyder, "Does Faith Entail Belief", *Faith and Philosophy* 33 (2) (2016), 142-62; 150 n.18.

particularly, I suggest that those with "divine faith" choose to make believing in line with divine revelation a doxastic practice which is basic and fundamental. That the practice is basic means that it is engaged in without the believer basing her engagement on evidence for the practice's reliability. In this way, divine faith resembles basic doxastic practices such as sense-perception and memory which Reformed Epistemologists propose as analogues for practices which form basic religious beliefs. Further, in construing the practice as "fundamental", I claim that its outputs cannot be overridden by those of any other practice. As a result, beliefs formed by the habit of divine faith are, at least paradigmatically, perfectly rationally tenacious. My theory also aims to meet other *desiderata* for Catholic models of faith, which I discuss below.

To this end of developing "Counter-Reformed Epistemology", my thesis will proceed as follows. In my first chapter I will explain in greater detail the claims of Reformed Epistemologists, and the criticisms of their project by Catholic philosophers. I shall argue that although these have some value, comparable criticisms can be levelled against many alternative models of faith preferred by Catholic philosophers. A modified version of Reformed Epistemology ("Counter-Reformed Epistemology"/CRE), can account for the properties which traditional doctrine accords to divine faith better than current alternative analyses of faith, whilst showing how the belief of many ordinary Catholics may be rational. Having set out my preferred model of faith and reason, the rest of my thesis represents a defence of CRE from a Catholic standpoint. In the second chapter, I aim to show that CRE is compatible with Karl Rahner's thesis of "Anonymous Christianity": i.e. the theory that those who non-culpably fail to believe in divine revelation as defined by the Church- including atheists- can nevertheless possess saving faith. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Magisterium has clearly taught that those who non-culpably lack explicit faith can be saved, and so any viable account of faith will benefit from giving some account of the salvation of explicit non-believers. I endeavour to extend CRE by offering an account of "implicit" faith which draws on the work of Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar. In the remaining three chapters, I then offer support to my contention that CRE is an authentically Catholic model of faith, by examining the views of several influential theologians within Western Catholic tradition (Augustine, Aquinas and Newman

respectively). I shall argue that these theologians all, to different degrees, formulate a religious epistemology similar to CRE.

2.1 Apologia Pro Opere Sua

Some readers might have concerns about the methodology involved in these later chapters. Firstly, I will be covering a fair bit of historical and conceptual ground, laying out the religious epistemologies of several prominent thinkers. A potential pitfall is the failure to grant sufficient attention to the views of any of the individuals whom I discuss. Secondly, I will be attempting to compare their positions to CRE, which itself draws on concepts and arguments developed as part of a modern project in analytic philosophy. Readers may worry that since my discussion will inevitably introduce terms from analytic philosophy into my discussion of historical theologians, I risk misrepresenting their views or else projecting onto their thoughts concerns foreign to their work. Doctoral-level contributions to Catholic theology which engage in historical dogmatic work, it may be felt, ought to stick to in-depth analysis of particular figures, with the aims of representing their views in the light of their own historically bound terminology and intellectual goals.

I should say something, therefore, in defence of the nature of my project. Firstly, with regards to the amount of ground covered, I believe that I have given each of the figures whom I examine enough detailed attention to be confident that I faithfully represent their views. It is fair to note, however, that whilst I aim to give a faithful exegesis of the thinkers examined, my concern is certainly not to present a developed overview of their entire theologies. Rather, I aim to engage critically with particular portions of their thought relevant to my contention that CRE is a salutary model of faith and reason. Further, in proposing that CRE is such a salutary model for an authentically Catholic religious epistemology, it is important for me to show that it has precedent in or at least is compatible with Catholic tradition, since the latter is taken to be an authoritative theological source by Catholics. Rather than being a flaw, therefore, critical engagement with a variety of historical sources is important for any constructive project in Catholic theology or philosophy.

It might be noted that the second worry is somewhat similar to a typical objection raised against the project which has become known as "analytic theology". Analytic theologians, often working within a shared intellectual framework of orthodox Christian belief, bring to bear the results of modern analytic philosophy of religion to discuss the content and truth of Christian doctrine.[18] My project aims to contribute to this developing academic current, whilst avoiding the typical criticism that analytic theologians adopt a mask of orthodoxy whilst failing to responsibly engage with historical Christian thought. In fact, although some analytic theologians deal with historical material in a perfunctory manner which fails to give it a fair historical exposition, more recent work has shown that analytic theology can engage fruitfully with traditional sources. With regard to this second concern, therefore, the proof of the pudding will largely be in the eating. I am fully aware that the concepts and concerns which drive my exposition of CRE are historically located, and somewhat foreign to those of the historical thinkers with whom I engage. To this end, I try hard not to draw anachronistic comparisons between their views and my own. Equally, however, one can exaggerate the extent to which modern analytic concerns about faith and reason were not shared by Catholic theologians. I believe that my research will show that each of the figures surveyed considered questions close to those raised by modern debates on faith and reason, and that their answer to such problems closely resembles my own. I leave it to the reader to judge the success of my efforts.

[18] For useful characterisations of Analytic Theology, see e.g. Oliver Crisp, "On Analytic Theology" in Oliver Crisp and Michael Rea (ed.) *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2009) and William Wood, "Trajectories, Traditions and Tools in Analytic Theology", *Journal of Analytic Theology* 4 (2016), 254-266.

Chapter One: Counter-Reformed Epistemology

1.0 Introduction

Reformed Epistemology presents an ostensibly innovative understanding of the relationship between faith and reason. In this chapter, I elucidate and evaluate the response of Catholic thinkers to Reformed Epistemology, with a view to appropriating its insights to develop a Catholic analysis of faith. I begin by briefly explaining the latter position and contemporary philosophical reactions to it (Section 1). Next, I suggest a series of dogmatic desiderata for a Catholic account of faith around which Reformed Epistemology can be evaluated. I then examine the appraisal of Reformed Epistemology by Catholic philosophers, concluding that several of their criticisms are sound and motivated by Reformed Epistemology's failure to meet these desiderata (Section 2). Nevertheless, I argue that various alternative attempts to construct religious epistemologies friendly to a Catholic view of faith also fail for similar reasons (Section 3). Happily, I suggest Catholic theologians need not despair of finding an analytic account of faith and reason. With salient alterations, a religious epistemology similar to Reformed Epistemology can be constructed which includes the properties of faith which Catholic theology requires. I end the chapter by outlining such a model ("Counter-Reformed Epistemology") and briefly defend its cogency (Section 4), before drawing some concluding remarks (Section 5).

1.1 Reformed Epistemology

I start by outlining in greater detail the position of Reformed Epistemology (hence, RE).The central claim of RE, beginning with Alvin Plantinga's seminal work "God and Other Minds"[1] and initially elucidated at length in the anthology "Faith and Rationality",[2] is that certain religious beliefs can possess significant positive epistemic status (e.g. "justification" or "warrant") without being inferred from non-religious beliefs. Indeed, some "foundational" religious beliefs possess such status without

[1] Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1967).
[2] Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, ed., *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1983). In the early 1980s Plantinga and Alston published several articles foreshadowing their positions in *Faith and Rationality*: for a full bibliography, cf. James Beilby, *Epistemology as Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

being reasoned to from any beliefs. Reformed Epistemologists often draw comparisons between Christian and secular beliefs in this respect. Apparently rational belief in other minds, the reliability of induction, or the reliability of memory, is not derived from belief in other propositions. Perhaps, Reformed Epistemologists suggest, Christian beliefs similarly arrived at are likewise rational.

Yet amongst Reformed Epistemologists, there is not unanimity as to precisely how these beliefs (religious or secular) are arrived at, or what positive epistemic status they enjoy. Plantinga suggests that the beliefs just listed are basic beliefs.[3] Basic beliefs are a constituent of foundationalist epistemologies, whereby beliefs are said to be justified by standing in correct epistemic relation to some "foundational" (i.e. basic) beliefs which a thinker holds. These latter are not inferred from other beliefs or justified by their relation to them in any way (contra coherentism). Rather, they are simply justified without recourse to other beliefs. This is not, however, to say that *nothing* contributes to their justification. On Plantinga's largely externalist account of justification, properly basic beliefs are formed on certain "grounds". Grounds are elements of the situation a believer finds herself in which "trigger" the relevant belief.[4] For example, upon seeing a tree before me, I immediately (without inference from beliefs such as "I am being appeared to treely") form the belief that there is a tree before me. Plantinga does not believe that all grounds adequate for justification include phenomenological "imagery" comparable to the "sensuous imagery" which accompanies sense-perception. Ostensibly, memorial beliefs and beliefs in *a priori* truths lack such phenomenological grounds; although Plantinga concedes that they may be grounded in "a sort of felt inclination…to belief" which he dubs "impulsional evidence".[5] Of course, not all beliefs are "properly" basic: i.e. belief which can rationally be held without epistemic support from other beliefs, when formed upon appropriate grounds. But Plantinga asserts that many Christian beliefs such as "God has forgiven me for my sins" (appropriately formed after confession) are thus properly basic.[6] To say that a belief is

[3] Alvin Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God" in Plantinga and Wolterstorff ed. *Faith and Rationality*, 48-55.
[4] Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God", 78-80.
[5] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York: OUP, 1993), 190-2. In *WCB*, 111 he calls this "doxastic experience".
[6] Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God", 80-2.

properly basic, however, is not on this account to say that is indefeasible. The justification conferred on basic beliefs is merely *prima facie* and can be removed by countervailing evidence.

Not all Reformed Epistemologists are committed to this analysis of theistic beliefs as "properly basic". William Alston's work on RE focuses on "doxastic practices",[7] some of which consist of forming beliefs in line with the phenomena mentioned above. In an early paper, Alston suggests that one is rational in engaging in a doxastic practice if one responsibly believes that it reliably yields true beliefs as outputs.[8] Some doxastic practices are judged to be thus reliable from the doxastic outputs of other practices (as in reductive accounts of testimony). But other practices cannot be judged reliable except in the "circular" sense that their outputs confirm their own reliability. Indeed, Alston holds that the methods of forming beliefs in accordance with the perceptions of our physical senses, or even with the canons of logic are of the latter type. Moreover, Alston holds that Christian doxastic practices (such as "Christian Mystical Practice"[9] (CMP) or consulting Church traditions[10]) are similarly self-justifying, meaning that from the perspective of 'epistemic' rationality they are (apparently) equally rational. The rationality of engaging in such practices is only *prima-facie*, however, and can be overridden by defeaters from other, more entrenched cognitive mechanisms.

In whatever way the "basic" nature of some religious beliefs is construed according to RE, Reformed Epistemologists share the intuition that there is no "neutral" position from which to consider which beliefs or practices should be "basic". The thought that religious beliefs might be properly basic, however, conflicts with a position which Plantinga dubs "classical foundationalism".[11] Classical foundationalism holds that the only properly basic beliefs are beliefs in *a priori* truths and truths arrived at by introspection, perhaps (more generously) together with perceptual or memorial beliefs. According to Plantinga, however, classical foundationalism fails by its own criteria, since there is no

[7] "A doxastic practice can be thought of as a system…of dispositions…each of which yields a belief as an output that is related in a certain way to an "input". (Alston, *Perceiving God*, 153). "Inputs" can be construed narrowly/widely, and include e.g. qualia or other beliefs. (Ibid., 156).
[8] William Alston, "Religious Experience and Belief", *Nous* 16 (1) (1982).
[9] William Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell UP,1991).
[10] William Alston, "On Knowing That We Know: The Application to Religious Knowledge" in C. Stephen Evans and Merold Westphal ed. *Christian Perspectives on Religious Knowledge*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).
[11] Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God", 47-59.

good argument from *a priori* truths or the data of sense-perception etc. to the effect that only such beliefs are properly basic. [12] Similarly, Alston observes that the practices of logical reasoning and sense-perception are themselves only justifiable by recourse to their own deliverances.[13] But Reformed Epistemologists do not try and set up some standard in place of classical foundationalism which apes its purportedly universal appeal. Rather, Plantinga suggests that we should be "particularists" when assessing which beliefs are properly basic.[14] In other words, we should simply construct any criteria for proper basiciality by surveying which beliefs we already treat as properly basic rather than by assuming some criteria *a priori*. This means that different communities might come to different conclusions as to which beliefs are properly basic. Whilst Christians might regard belief in the existence of God as properly basic, atheists will doubtless disagree. According to Plantinga et. al. there is no "view from nowhere" on this matter. However, this does not mean that one can have *no* criteria for proper basicality, and so Christians and atheists might legitimately reject the claims of believers in "the Great Pumpkin" to hold properly basic religious beliefs concerning him, unless this involves some inconsistency.

To clarify, it might help to explain the much-debated notion of "justification", which the Reformed Epistemologists under discussion seem to presuppose. In large part, contemporary debate about "justification" has focused on the divergence between "internalist" and "externalist" understandings of the term. [15] The initial attempts of Reformed Epistemologists in the 1980s to demonstrate that Christian belief is justified considered justification in internalist, "deontic" terms as a matter of 'not

[12] Alvin Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God" in Alvian Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff ed. *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1983), 59.
[13] Alston, "On Knowing That We Know", 25-34; *Perceiving God*, 102-143.
[14] Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God", 75-78.
[15] "Internalist" positions on justification are normally considered to be those which have an "awareness" requirement - i.e. they make the justification of a belief dependent on actual or potential awareness of something contributing to its justification- and "externalist" theories to be those which lack such an awareness requirement. Thus internalists usually think that justification at base depends upon first person access via introspection to mental states which are "inside" the believer, whereas externalists think that justification supervenes on factors "outside" the agent's mind such as their environment and belief-forming procedures. Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, *Evidentialism: Essays in Epistemology* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 54-8 argue that this differentiation between the positions is flawed, since their preferred internalist theory- "mentalism", whereby justification supervenes on mental states, which are evidently "inside" the mind- does not include the awareness requirement. For an argument that mentalism is neither internalist nor externalist, cf. Michael Bergmann, *Justification Without Awareness* (New York: OUP, 2006), 55.

acting against one's (perceived or "subjective") epistemic duties'.[16] Sometimes this is explicitly stated, for example by Wolterstorff when defining justification in *Faith and Rationality*.[17] Whilst in the same volume Plantinga shows some concern for an "externalist" understanding of justification, for the most part he presents the charge of evidentialists which he is seeking to address as the allegation that theists are acting against some *prima facie* epistemic obligation.

From the late 1980s, however, Plantinga began to argue for an externalist notion of warrant- by his definition, the ingredient which combined with true belief results in knowledge.[18] In particular, Plantinga adopted a "proper functionalist" epistemology. On this view, "a belief has warrant for a person *S* only if that belief is produced in *S* by cognitive faculties functioning properly (subject to no dysfunction) in a cognitive environment that is appropriate for *S*'s kind of cognitive faculties, according to a design plan that is successfully aimed at truth".[19] Warrant comes in degrees, proportionate to the amount of confidence with which a believer holds her belief.[20] Linda Zagzebski notes[21] that George Mavrodes and Nicholas Wolterstorff agree with Plantinga on this point. Conjoined with Plantinga's affirmation of the positive status enjoyed by "basic" beliefs, therefore, these philosophers hold that for a belief to have significant positive epistemic status- including warrant- it is not necessary that the believer also believe that it has warrant.

Alston struck a somewhat different posture regarding "externalist" justification. In "An Internalist Externalism"[22], Alston argues that to be justified, a belief must have *grounds*- that is to say, mental possessions of a subject which suggest the truth of the belief. Although Alston maintains that the *adequacy* of a belief's grounds need not be perceived by the subject, being in fact a function of its "reliability" in generating true beliefs, he maintains that a general ability to specify the grounds of a

[16] Beilby, *Epistemology as Theology*, 56. Although later, in *WPF*, Plantinga tends to regard a deontic conception of justification as the driving force behind "internalism", there are other motivations for and formulations of internalism- cf. Bergmann, *Justification*, 45-75.
[17] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Can Belief in God be Rational?" in Plantinga and Wolterstorff ed. *Faith and Rationality*, 168.
[18] The results are found in definitive form in Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate* (New York: OUP, 1993) and *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York: OUP, 1993).
[19] Plantinga, *WCB*, 156.
[20] Plantinga, *WPF*, 8-9.
[21] Linda Zagzebski, "Religious Knowledge and the Virtues of the Mind", in Linda Zagzebski ed. *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP [1993), 202.
[22] William Alston, "An Internalist Externalism", *Synthese* 74 (3) (1988).

belief, or at least to think that is not just something which has "popped into one's head" is required for its justification. In *Perceiving God*, however, Alston avows that his aim is to evaluate the justification of CMP from a purely "reliabilist" angle.[23] Still, much of his discussion is taken up with showing that it is practically (and perhaps in an internalist sense, epistemically) rational for individuals to engage in socially established doxastic practices like CMP which can only be known to "reliably" yield true beliefs through their own deliverances.[24]

Whilst Plantinga retains a more "internalist" notion of justification as the non-violation of intellectual duties,[25] in *Warranted Christian Belief* [26] (hence, *WCB*), he argues that it is important that Christians can show that their beliefs have warrant if they are true. [27] This is to rebut the *de jure* objection to Christian belief, which is that even if true, Christian faith is irrational because given our current epistemic abilities and environment, it cannot be known to be true. Plantinga argues that if Christianity is true, God has probably designed and created a mechanism- the *sensus divinitatis*- to cause the belief that God exists (or rather, beliefs such as "the universe was created by God" which obviously entail God's existence) in all people.[28] Further, He has graciously imparted to Christians another mechanism- the *"Internal Instigation of the Holy Spirit"* (IIHS)- to cause assent to the "Great Truths of the Gospel".[29] These mechanisms, according to Plantinga, are appropriately triggered by certain circumstances, such as encounters with natural beauty or the reading of Scripture, and when functioning properly yield true beliefs. Beliefs produced by these faculties therefore have *prima facie* warrant, because they are produced by reliably truth-directed faculties, functioning in environments for which they were designed.[30] Apparently, however, the *sensus divinitatis*, which ought to function

[23] William Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991), 75.
[24] Cf. Particularly, Alston, *Perceiving God*, 146-183
[25] In Chapter 3 of *WCB,* Plantinga discusses at length the question of whether the strongest *de jure* objection to Christianity is that it is unjustified in a deontic/internalist sense. Plantinga's response is that (for reasons given in *Faith and Rationality*), it is easy to show that someone might be justified in believing Christianity to be true given the self-undermining nature of classical foundationalism. But given that many mad beliefs might be similarly justified, Plantinga concludes that "internalist" justification is necessary but not sufficient for the defeat of the *de jure* objection.
[26] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, (New York: OUP 2000).
[27] Plantinga, *WCB* Part III, *passim*.
[28] Plantinga, *WCB*, 167-198.
[29] *Ibid*. 241-266.
[30] Plantinga terms his model for the formation of Christian beliefs the "Extended A/C [Aquinas/Calvin] Model".

universally, is impeded in its proper function, which Plantinga claims is the result of sinfulness.[31] In sum, Christian beliefs likely have warrant if true. Despite this, internalist justification, continues to play an important part in Plantinga's defence of the rationality of Christianity, because he does not claim to have any philosophical argument for the truth of his account on which Christian faith amounts to "knowledge". Rather, he apparently regards Christians as entitled to believe in the truth of his account since it is likely true on Christianity.[32] Basic belief in the gospel is itself *prima facie* justified, and not, in Plantinga's view, threatened by successful defeaters. Thus, Christians need not violate any subjective epistemic duties in holding to faith.

It should be observed that this latter account of Christian belief places little emphasis on any *free decision* to embrace faith. Both Plantinga[33] and Alston[34] believe that direct doxastic voluntarism- the notion that humans can by an exercise of the will immediately choose to adopt certain beliefs- is false. Alston argues that in practice, humans lack even the ability to "indirectly" inculcate beliefs which they do not initially incline to accept on the basis of evidence by engaging in actions other than the examination of new evidence. Whilst there is no part of RE which necessitates this move, Plantinga's exemplar accounts of coming to Christian belief lack space for the role of the will. Plantinga recounts, for example, that on hearing an exposition of Paul's account of justification, John Wesley was struck with the conviction that salvation is available through faith in Christ. No mention is made of a decision to believe on Wesley's part.[35] Thus also, Plantinga often talks of belief formation in passive terms rather than talking of "acts" of belief.[36] Nevertheless, on Plantinga's account, the will plays some role to indirectly influence belief in God through the function of the *sensus divinitatis.* This is because Plantinga adopts Calvin's suggestion that sinfulness, caused by disorded affections and choices, inhibits the function of the *sensus*.[37]

---

[31] Plantinga, *WCB,* 199-240.
[32] *Ibid*., 499.
[33] *Ibid.*, 96.
[34] William Alston, *Beyond "Justification" Dimensions of Epistemic Evaluation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005), 62-73.
[35] Plantinga, *WCB,* 288.
[36] E.g., warranted beliefs are "produced by" properly functioning cognitive mechanisms.
[37] Plantinga, *WCB,* 205.

To summarise, the key claims of Reformed Epistemology are as follows: firstly, Christian beliefs, like certain secular beliefs, can be justified in a deontic or "internalist" sense if held as basic and therefore without appeal to evidence acceptable to sceptics lacking such basic belief. Secondly, that there is no "neutral" perspective from which to judge which beliefs are properly basic. As Linda Zagzebski notes, although Plantinga makes reference to believing "communities" making their decision on this matter by way of paradigm cases, there seems little to prevent this becoming a matter for individuals to decide upon themselves.[38] Thirdly, it is argued that basic Christian beliefs (if true) possess considerable positive epistemic status of an externalist variety.

1.2 Secular Responses to Reformed Epistemology

In the next section of this chapter, I will evaluate the claims of RE according to a set of Catholic desiderata for accounts of faith. However, RE has been widely discussed by secular philosophers. Since according to Catholic doctrine, faith is not an irrational doxastic practice, it is important for Catholics that any model of faith can pass philosophical muster.[39] Since I lack space to give an extensive evaluation of RE in light of secular criticism, I shall instead give an overview of how three central claims of RE have fared in the judgement of philosophers, after almost forty years of evaluation.[40]

The first claim advanced by Reformed Epistemologists was that, since classical foundationalism provides too narrow criteria for properly basic beliefs, "basic" Christian beliefs might rationally be judged properly basic from a Christian perspective. Accordingly, Christians can be *prima facie* justified in their religious beliefs even if they do not believe them on the basis of evidence acceptable to sceptics. This position was initially greeted with some incredulity by philosophers, with some fearing that swapping Classical Foundationalism for Plantinga's "particularist" method of identifying properly basic beliefs would lead to even manifestly irrational beliefs being granted justification. In

[38] Zagzebski, "Religious Knowledge", 206.
[39] "Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason". *CCC* 159/p.40, quoting *Dei Filius* IV (Denzinger, 3017).
[40] For overviews of philosophical responses to RE, cf. Deane-Peter Baker *Tayloring Reformed Epistemology*: *Charles Taylor, Alvin Plantinga and the de jure challenge to Christian Belief* (London: SCM, 2007), 19-101, Andrew Moon, "Recent Work in Reformed Epistemology", *Philosophy Compass* 11 (2016).

similar vein, some philosophers have maintained that in order to remain rational in her faith, a Christian must be able to justify her belief with arguments acceptable to sceptics from different religious traditions.[41]

Despite such animadversions, Trent Dougherty observes that many contemporary epistemologists grant that non-inferential religious beliefs can possess *prima facie* justification.[42] This is because, as Norman Kretzmann presciently argued, such an affirmation is plausible on many forms of "internalist" evidentialism which allow that a broader range of mental states than knowledge of propositions constitutes evidence.[43] One such mental state discussed in contemporary literature is "appearance" or "seeming". An influential recent position termed "phenomenal conservatism" holds that an "appearance that *p*" confers *prima facie* justification on *p*. The precise nature of "appearances" is debated.[44] Sometimes, an "appearance" that *p* is identified with the inclination to believe that *p*. However, this is questionable: It might seem, for example, that a ceiling is vaulted, although if I am aware that it is merely a *trompe l'oeil*, I need have no inclination to believe that it is vaulted. Dougherty makes a helpful suggestion that we distinguish between appearing "as though" and appearing "that". Roughly, something can appear "as though" it is the case just if one experiences phenomena which usually represent or are taken to represent the relevant object or state of affairs in question. By contrast, something can appear "that" it is the case only if the subject feels an inclination to believe the proposition (perhaps in conjunction with suitable phenomenology) which is perhaps what Plantinga means by "impulsional evidence". On Dougherty's view, which I find plausible, only "appearances that" *p* generate *prima facie* justification for believing *p*.

On phenomenal conservatism and related positions,[45] therefore, the appearance "as though" or perhaps better that God exists[46] would be enough (*ceteris paribus*) to ground rational belief in God.[47]

---

[41] Cf. Baker, *Tayloring Reformed Epistemology*, 73-8.
[42] Trent Dougherty and Chris Tweedt, "Religious Epistemology", *Philosophy Compass* 10 (8) (2015); 553-4.
[43] Norman Kretzmann, "Evidence Against Anti-Evidentialism", in Kelly James Clark ed. *Our Knowledge of God: Essays on Natural and Philosophical Theology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992).
[44] Cf. Chris Tucker, "Seemings and Justification: An Introduction" in Chris Tucker (ed.) *Seemings and Justification: New Essays on Dogmatism and Phenomenal Conservatism*. (New York: Oxford UP, 2013), 3-9.
[45] For related positions, cf. Swinburne's "Principle of Credulity" (Richard Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification* (New York: OUP, 2001), 135-41, and Dougherty's "Reasons Commonsensism" (Trent Doughterty, "Faith, Trust and Testimony: An Evidentialist Account" in Laura Callahan and Timothy O'Connor ed. *Religious Faith*

Interestingly, some opponents of phenomenal conservatism object that it assigns justification to unusual (even, religious!) beliefs.[48] Some such opponents therefore endorse "dogmatism"- that is, phenomenal conservatism which restricts the range of appearances which confer justification in some manner (often, approaching classical foundationalism). But as Plantinga originally argued in *Faith and Rationality*, there seems little reason that Christians cannot rationally adopt their own form of dogmatism. Similarly, from a perspective closer to Alston's, Ernest Sosa has agreed that as regards internalist justification, the best that can be said for many doxastic practices (e.g. both sense perception and more idiosyncratic/unreliable practices such as crystal ball-gazing) is that their deliverances support their own claim to reliability.[49] In short, therefore, the claim that basic Christian beliefs can be *prima facie* justified in an internalist sense has received extensive support in modern epistemology.

Plantinga claims that in addition to possessing "internalist" justification, basic Christian beliefs are warranted if true. The affirmation that basic Christian beliefs enjoy positive epistemic status of an "externalist" variety if true is the second major claim of RE which I shall examine. In Plantinga's case, he supports this claim by advancing a particular account of warrant with which to assess the epistemic status of basic Christian beliefs. Plantinga's definition of warrant, however, has failed to achieve widespread acceptance. Firstly, it has been argued that "proper functionalism" is not necessary for warrant, due to cases whereby subjects have warranted beliefs without their faculties having been designed (cf. Sosa's "Swampman").[50] More damningly, several philosophers have argued that beliefs which possess "warrant" in Plantinga's sense can fail to be instances of knowledge

---

and Intellectual Virtue (New York: OUP, 2014), 102). On "weak foundationalism", a proposition must possess sufficient coherence with one's other beliefs in addition to "seeming" to be true in order to qualify as *prima facie* justified. Perhaps basic religious beliefs can still emerge as *prima facie* justified (albeit with less justification than e.g. sensory beliefs) on this picture- cf. Keith DeRose "Direct Warrant Realism" in Andrew Dole and Andrew Chignell, ed. *God and the Ethics of Belief: New Essays in Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Cambridge UP 2005).

[46]Perhaps it might seem "as though" God exists in mystical experience- cf. *Perceiving God*, 9-67.

[47] For an application of phenomenal conservatism to religious belief, cf. Chris Tucker, "Phenomenal Conservatism and Evidentialism in Religious Epistemology" in Raymond vanArragon and Kelly James Clark ed. *Evidence and Religious Belief* (Oxford: OUP 2011).

[48] E.g. Michael Tooley, "Michael Huemer and the Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism" in Tucker (ed.), *Seemings and Justification*, 319-21.

[49] Ernest Sosa, "Reflective Knowledge in the Best Circles", in Matthias Steup ed. *Knowledge, Truth and Duty: Essays in Epistemic Justification, Responsibility, and Virtue* (New York: OUP, 2001); 197-200.

[50] Ernest Sosa, "Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epistemology", *Nous* 27 (1) (1993).

because they fall prey to Gettier-style counter-examples.[51] Whilst Plantinga and others have responded to these objections to his theory,[52] many philosophers remain unconvinced. Similarly, the value of Alston's attempt to argue that CMP meets "reliabilist" criteria for justification might be diminished by prominent critiques of reliabilism such as the "generality problem".[53] Ian Church has argued that criticism of Plantinga's account of knowledge is unsurprising, since Church endorses the radical suggestion that all attempts to explain what makes for knowledge have, after Gettier, been subject to counter-example. [54] This has led some epistemologists, following Timothy Williamson, to argue that there is no realistic prospect of giving a non-circular definition of knowledge/warrant[55] (although according to Williamson, we can specify necessary conditions for knowledge). [56] If Williamson is correct, it will be difficult to motivate the claim that Christian beliefs would count as knowledge if true other than by appealing to intuition that the deliverances of the IIHS would count as knowledge and showing that Christian belief so formed meets necessary standards for knowledge.[57] Equally, perhaps Williamson is wrong and some other analysis of knowledge is correct. In that case, as Andrew Moon has argued, Christian belief produced by the IIHS would count as knowledge on

[51] E.g. Linda Zagzebski, "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (1994); Peter Klein/Richard Feldman in Jonathan Kvanvig ed. *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology: Essays in Honour of Plantinga's Theory of Knowledge* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996); Ian Church, "50 Years of Gettier: A New Direction in Religious Epistemology?", *Journal of Analytic Theology* 3 (2015).
[52] E.g. Alvin Plantinga, "Respondeo" in Feldman and Kvanvig ed. *Warrant*; *WCB* 156-61; Bergmann, *Justification*, 147-51.
[53] Cf. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, 14-20.
[54] Church, "50 Years of Gettier".
[55] Timothy Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits* (Oxford, OUP 2000), 2-5.
[56] E.g. Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 123-30.
[57] One might worry that the suggestion that the concept of knowledge is not susceptible to reductive analysis not only undermines a key epistemological project of giving such an analysis, but also the attempt by RE to argue that basic Christian beliefs are warranted. As carried out by Plantinga, for example, this attempt rests on the development of a particular (reductive) analysis of knowledge, so that basic Christian beliefs can be shown to possess the properties necessary to count as knowledge. If reductive analyses of knowledge fail, so will this avenue of showing that basic Christian beliefs are warranted. However, scepticism about our ability to analyse knowledge need not lead to scepticism to identify individual cases of beliefs which count as knowledge. Importantly, RE paints a detailed picture of the formation of basic Christian beliefs, including details about their causal origin, coherence with proper cognitive function, appropriateness to our environment, etc. A re-worked version of RE might, therefore, suggest that given the properties/origins which basic Christian beliefs will possess if Christianity is true, it is intuitive to hold that these beliefs are warranted given Christianity. Such an intuition might be further elicited by the comparison between these beliefs and secular beliefs which are instances of knowledge, or by showing that Christian beliefs at least meet certain necessary conditions on knowledge. Thus whilst radical, the suggestion that knowledge is not susceptible of reductive analysis need not entirely rule out attempts to argue that Christian beliefs are warranted, or vitiate the value of Plantinga's account of their formation.

many externalist accounts of justification/knowledge (e.g. "virtue epistemology"). [58] In short, although it is questionable whether RE can demonstrate conclusively that basic Christian beliefs count as knowledge if true, this suggests more about ongoing controversies in epistemology than a flaw in RE.

Finally, building on their analysis of properly basic Christian belief, Reformed Epistemologists sometimes conclude that they have explained how the faith of many Christian believers is in fact justified/warranted. Plantinga, for example, writes that is Extended A/C model shows that "if Christian belief is true, then it is *rational* and *warranted* for most of those who accept it", [59] although acknowledging that for many Christians, "the model isn't a wholly accurate description". [60] Yet as James Beilby argues, [61] many Christians do not testify to having faith as Plantinga describes it. Apparently, their faith is largely dependent on evidence/the testimony of experts within their community, or else their basic Christian belief is weak and requires evidential support to bolster their levels of credence. The question of whether such Christian believers are justified/warranted in their faith may depend on the amount of evidence on offer to them and their ability to evaluate it properly, providing ammunition for "evidentialist" objections to the rationality of Christian faith which RE seeks to dispel. RE has likely only achieved limited success in its goal of showing that Christians are justified/warranted in their faith; though this is no small achievement.[62]

In all, whilst RE remains open to criticism, many modern philosophers would regard it as having achieved some success in modelling how Christian belief is rationally grounded. Given the philosophical plausibility of RE, it is now appropriate to assess its success from a theological angle.

[58] Moon, "Recent Work", 85-87.
[59] WCB 242.
[60] Alvin Plantinga "Reply", *Philosophical Books* 42 (2), 127.
[61] Beilby, *Epistemology of Theology*, 137.
[62] Unlike Plantinga, Alston thinks it proper for Christians to receive some justification for their beliefs from evidentialist apologetics, and some from CMP- cf. William Alston, "The Place of Religious Experience in the Grounds of Belief" in Clark ed. *Our Knowledge of God*.

2.0 Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology

2.1 Desiderata for a Catholic Analysis of Faith

Catholic doctrine makes particular claims about the virtue of faith, which a Catholic analysis of faith should accommodate. In this section, I will briefly outline some properties which faith should embody on a Catholic account. The ability to account for these properties therefore creates a set of desiderata around which analyses of faith can be judged from a Catholic perspective.

A succinct definition of faith is given by the First Vatican Council, where it is described as "the beginning of human salvation… a supernatural virtue by which we, with the aid and inspiration of the grace of God, believe that the things revealed by Him are true, not because the intrinsic truth of the revealed things has been perceived by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God Himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived." [63] More pithily, the Catechism of the Catholic Church terms faith "a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed".[64] Building on these definitions, we can examine more closely what is involved in the Catholic understanding of faith. Firstly, however, it is important to note that in Catholic theology, and as used below, "faith" has a somewhat restricted sense. Primarily, "faith" refers to propositional assent to divinely revealed propositions. Protestant theology sometimes gives "faith" a wider variety of meanings, including e.g. fiducial trust that God effects one's salvation, or the loving relationship with God which constitutes a "faithful" Christian life. Whilst the Church recognises that some such attitudes are vital for the Christian life of faith, Catholic tradition normally followed Augustine in defining faith in terms of propositional assent, whilst discussing these other attitudes under the rubric of "hope" or "charity".

If faith is the assent to truth as divinely revealed, one might wonder which believing subjects are properly supposed to exercise such assent by Catholic theology. An obvious answer is that each individual is supposed to accept revelation as a unique believing subject. Thus, the Catechism repeatedly terms faith a "personal" act,[65] and in line with the Council of Trent teaches that faith is

[63] *Dei Filius*, III (Denzinger, 3008).
[64] *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Revised Edition* (London: Burns & Oates, 2002) 150/p.37.
[65] Cf. *CCC* 150, 166, 176/pp. 37-44.

necessary for salvation as one of the theological virtues which are the formal cause of justification in each redeemed individual.[66] My discussion of faith will focus on this understanding of faith as an act of individual believers.

However, the Catechism also endorses a tradition according to which the believing subject of faith is not merely individual Christians, but also the Church as a corporate whole.[67] It is unclear to what extent language of the Church as a believing subject should be taken to imply that the Church should be metaphysically characterised as a "person" (whether understood as a centre of consciousness or otherwise). In support of this contention, one might note the Scriptural description of the Church as the bride of Christ, which suggests a degree of personal agency which one might wish to characterise as metaphysically parallel to Christ's personhood.[68] However, the manner in which a "People of God" might constitute a single person is unclear, and is complicated by the fact that Biblical imagery also presents Christ himself as the "head" of the Church which is His body, which can sometimes seem to imply that the "person" of the Church/Christians is identical with that of Christ.[69] Given the scope and difficulty of this subject, I will not attempt to provide an account of how the act of faith might be exercised by the Church in this way.

Alternatively, language about the Church as the subject of faith might be taken as a figurative expression of the aggregate faith of the Church's members; or else the Church's "faith" might be thought to supervene on the faith of its members. In this way we often talk of nations or other groups as agents without being committed to a strong metaphysical account of their personhood which would posit some communal consciousness, for example.[70] The Catechism summarises its discussing of the Church's faith as follows: "Believing is an ecclesial act. The Church's faith precedes, engenders,

[66] *CCC*. 183/p.44; Trent Session VI, Ch 7 (Denzinger, 1530).
[67] *CCC* 166-175/pp/42-4. This tradition is often expressed in liturgy- cf. *CCC* 168.
[68] Cf. Rev 19:7, 22:17; Eph 5:27; *CCC* 796/p.184.
[69] Cf. 1 Cor 6:15-17, 12:12-27; Eph 5:23; Col 1.18; Gal 2:20; *CCC* 792-5. For discussion of the relation between Christ as bride and body in modern ecclesiology which brings out this tension, cf. Paul McPartlan, "Who is the Church? Zizioulas and von Balthasar on the Church's Identity", *Ecclesiology* 4 (2008), 271-88.
[70] Whether the holding of beliefs by secular groups can be adequately reduced to the fact that an aggregate of their members hold these beliefs is contested in modern "social" epistemology. Cf. Jennifer Lackey, ed. *Essays in Collective Epistemology* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 2-4.

supports and nourishes our faith."[71] As shall be made clear below, on my account Catholic faith in individuals involves assent to divine revelation as it is transmitted to the Church in the deposit of faith and then proposed for belief by her. Accordingly, the faith of individuals discussed in this thesis is "ecclesial" insofar as it involves the acceptance of teaching received from and explicated by the Church. Moreover, since individual Catholics only possess a partial grasp of the full depth and implications of revelation (which are also developed and elucidated over time), the faith of each believer might be said to form part of the Church's acceptance of God's truth.[72] As Joseph Ratzinger notes, it is no accident that Catholic faith is essentially communal in this way given that the life of faith aims at not only uniting a believer to God, but also to her fellow humans.[73] Given that the Church's own act of faith plausibly consists of or supervenes on the faith of its members, it is not inappropriate that I focus my discussion below on the faith of individual believers. Yet this should not obscure the fact that Catholic faith necessarily has a social dimension since the faith of individual believers is always grounded in and helps to constitute the full response to divine revelation which given by the whole Church.

We can now move on to consider the Catholic characterisation of faith more closely. Firstly, faith is clearly an assent to the truths which God has revealed (faith's "material cause" or *fides quae*) in virtue of the fact that God has revealed them (faith's "formal cause" or *fides qua*). Traditionally, as will become clear below, the relevant assent of faith has been conceived of as propositional assent to the truths of the gospel as interpreted by the Catholic Church. Vatican I confirms this view by affirming that "by divine and Catholic faith, all those things must be believed which are contained in the written word of God and in tradition, and those which are proposed by the Church, either in a solemn pronouncement or in her ordinary and universal teaching power, to be believed as divinely revealed."[74] Latterly, certain theologians have maintained that revelation also has a non-propositional

[71] *CCC*, 181/p.44.
[72] Or else, perhaps the Church's faith supervenes on that of its members. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 98.
[73] Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 82-100. He summarises, "Thus faith embraces, as essential parts of itself, the profession of faith, the word and the unity it effects; it embraces entry into the community's worship of God and…[the] Church" (*Ibid*., 100).
[74] *Dei Filius*, III (Denzinger, 3011).

element which can be accepted without propositional assent. I discuss some such views in the following chapter. Whilst I wish to allow for the possibility of non-propositional faith, the model of faith which I defend in this chapter follows the traditional, propositional understanding.

Following Jonathan Kvanvig, one might query why propositional assent to revelation is supposed to be virtuous or valuable.[75] One suggestion might be that propositional knowledge is useful because it often directs human action; knowledge of revealed propositions might therefore help to guide human action in ways suitable to our supernatural end, knowledge of which surpasses our natural cognitive capacities.[76] However, it might be objected that even complicated and cohesive sets of human actions, such as those necessary to speak a language or ride a bike, can be performed without any propositional beliefs about how to perform these tasks.[77] In reply, I accept that propositional divine faith is not valuable because it is absolutely necessary for one to engage in actions essential to Christian life.[78] Propositional belief may often, though, serve an important role in guiding and enabling one's choice to engage in certain actions when the latter are the object of conscious, propositional reflection. Thus, the propositional belief that Christ forgives sins and requires the same of his followers might guide one's conscious decision to forgive another person and inspire relevant affections which will aid in this task (e.g. gratitude at Christ's forgiveness and a delight in forgiving others).

However, propositional acceptance of divine testimony can be valuable independently of its relation to human action. When an individual believes in a proposition on the basis that it is divinely revealed, she implicitly acknowledges that it is a least practically rational to believe God's testimony about the truth of the revealed proposition. Indeed, she might well assent to the proposition on the grounds that God is a perfectly reliable testifier whose testimony rationally and morally obliges our assent to revealed propositions. Thus propositional faith is a means of rendering God his due as an epistemic

[75] Jonathan Kvanvig, *Faith and Humility* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 10-16.
[76] Cf. STIa.1.1, *resp*.
[77] Usually engagement in these tasks will imply the existence of *some* dispositional beliefs in adult subjects, such as the belief that they are able to perform the task.
[78] Even if propositional attitudes were necessary for the engagement in these actions, other attitudes such as "hope that", or commitment to a form of life might suffice. Cf. Kvanvig, *Faith and Humility*, 19-20.

authority, and might be thought to constitute an act of worship.[79] Like other acts of worship, however, the value of propositional assent to divine testimony might be marred by a lack of charity. Moreover, an assertion of the value of acknowledging God's epistemic authority as a testifier to propositional truth need not imply that non-propositional faith cannot also be valuable for similar reasons.

From an analytic perspective, one might wonder whether the "assent" of faith to revealed dogma should be understood as "belief" or "acceptance". There are various ways of drawing this distinction explored in contemporary literature. Sometimes, "acceptance" is largely synonymous with treating a proposition as if it were true when engaging in areas of practical or theoretical reasoning; primarily on the grounds of convenience.[80] So understood, it will be evident in following chapters that Catholic tradition affirms that faith consists of belief rather than acceptance. Alternatively, the distinction is drawn in terms of the ease with which assent is evoked and inspires further beliefs and actions in turn. According to Keith Lehrer, for example, belief is a "first-order doxastic state" of assent, which is caused by the *automatic* processing of information.[81] Acceptance, by contrast, is a (perhaps more difficult) conscious and deliberate "second-order" affirmation of the automatic assent. Jennifer Church also draws attention to the way in which "beliefs" are easily integrated into our wider noetic structure, automatically generating other beliefs and actions, whereas "acceptances" can fail to easily evoke further beliefs and actions.[82] Both these facets of "acceptance" can be seen in the case of a mother who accepts (but fails to believe) that her son has died. Despite assenting to the proposition that her son is dead with perfect certainty, she may have to "remind herself" of evidence for that fact, since her son's existence is ordinarily so foundational to her mental and emotional life. Moreover, she may well struggle to take the death "to heart"; occasionally thinking or behaving in ways which assume his continued existence.

[79] Cf. *CCC* 2086: "The first commandment [i.e. to worship God alone] embraces faith, hope, and charity. When we say 'God' we confess a constant, unchangeable being, always the same, faithful and just, without any evil. It follows that we must necessarily accept his words and have complete faith in him and acknowledge his authority."
[80] See e.g. Michael Bratman, "Practical Reasoning and Acceptance in a Context", *Mind* 101 (1992).
[81] Keith Lehrer, "Belief, Acceptance and Cognition" in Herman Parett ed. *On Believing* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1983).
[82] Jennifer Church, "Taking it to Heart: What Choice do We Have?", *The Monist* 85 (3) (2002).

Since the latter distinction is a product of analytic epistemology, there is no dogmatic indication of whether the assent of faith is to be regarded as an act of belief or acceptance. On the one hand, Catholic theologians often talk of a "*habitus*" of faith, which refers to a disposition to assent to revelation, the exercise of which can become habitual through co-operation with grace such that assent gradually becomes more automatically elicited (i.e. "belief"). By contrast, it is recognised by many theologians that the initial "act" of faith often follows a conscious process of reasoning and is under the control of the will. Some epistemologists allow that "acceptance" is under the direct control of the will, but not "belief". I suggest, therefore, that whilst faith ideally involves "belief" thus understood on the Catholic account, it may be enough for faith that one "accepts" doctrine as true.[83] Henceforth, I will set this issue aside, and use the term "belief" and its cognates for whatever species of assent is appropriate to faith.

Secondly, Catholic faith is said to be "supernatural" or "gracious".[84] The Catechism describes grace as "the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God".[85] In this respect, "grace" is contrasted by Catholic theology with the natural sustenance and abilities that God bestows on humans. Briefly, according to the Catholic account, grace is a "free and undeserved" gift over and above God's gift of creation. Partly, this is because grace is in part a response to sin, for which humans do not deserve pardon. Moreover, whereas grace offers a "supernatural" level of participation in God's nature as our *telos*, human life would have still have integrity were God merely to have intended that humans achieved a less intimate degree of fellowship with Himself.[86] I explore some recent debates about grace below, but here I merely note that the distinction between "grace" and "nature" does not require that humans have ever actually existed without some of the effects of grace, or without being ultimately offered the supernatural end of

[83] Both Plantinga and Alston allow that faith might be a matter of acceptance rather than belief- cf. Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God", 37; William Alston, "Belief, Acceptance and Religious Faith", in Jeff Jordan and Daniel Howard-Snyder ed. *Faith Freedom and Rationality* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996).
[84] Cf. *CCC* 153/p.38: "Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him". Cf. Second Council of Orange, Canon 7 (Denzinger 377). From the twelfth century, Catholic theologians distinguished "divine"/"supernatural" faith which is a gift of grace necessary for salvation, and "human"/"natural" faith which is attainable by natural human intellectual capacities. Henceforth, "faith" refers to "divine faith" unless otherwise specified.
[85] *CCC* 1996/ p.434.
[86] *Humani Generis* 26 (Denzinger 2317).

beatitude.[87] Consequently, it is difficult to differentiate between acts and faculties which are "natural" or "supernatural". I suggest that the following three indicators help to identify "infused" human capacities, habits etc. Firstly, since supernatural capacities are not necessarily possessed by humans, one should be able to conceive of humans existing without them. Secondly, since the exercise of supernatural capacities is also a gracious gift, plausibly, humans cannot easily ensure the adoption of an infused habit by the simple exercise of our natural capacities. Finally, whilst Aquinas' adage "*gratia not tollit naturam, sed perficit"*[88] is broadly accurate, the call to supernatural fellowship with God creates obligations which supersede our natural inclinations. Accordingly, particularly in our fallen state, we might expect humans to experience some natural disinclination to adopt gracious habits.

Further, faith is "certain". This term refers, I suggest, to two distinct properties of faith. Firstly, "certainty" means something like confidence- i.e. a high "degree of credence". According to many epistemologists, "belief" comes in degrees, which express the relative firmness of beliefs and ideally corresponds to the probability of a proposition given one's evidence. Thus, one might say that one is more confident that Britain is an island than that it will rain tomorrow, although one believes both propositions. As Plantinga notes, it is not obvious that this analysis is correct.[89] Perhaps rather than belief being a graduated property, humans believe- without gradation- that propositions have varying degrees of probability. Either way, on Catholic doctrine, faith involves assenting to revealed truths with the highest possible level of credence (certainty). Thus the Catechism quotes Aquinas, "the certainty that the divine light gives is greater than that which the light of natural reason gives",[90] and Innocent XI condemned the proposition that the assent of supernatural faith is compatible with "merely probable knowledge of revelation".[91] Since some truths can plausibly be known with

[87] Nevertheless, the difference between moral ideals/behaviour espoused by saints and "virtuous pagans" means that one should not naively conflate natural and gracious intellectual or practical dispositions. For an argument in Neo-Thomist vein that "even now, nature, natural order and natural end are not mere abstractions or limit concepts- rather, they are real principles to which we gain access precisely *through* abstraction from…historical circumstance, natural accident, sin and grace", cf. Steven Long, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham UP, 2010), 200 *et passim*.
[88] STIa.18.I ad2.
[89] Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, 117-9.
[90] STIIaIIae.171.5.obj 3.
[91] Denzinger, 2122.

certainty by "natural reason", the former quote implies that truths of faith are known with (*mirabile dictu*) an even greater degree of credence, rather than being perceived as merely "probably" true.

This still leaves open, the question of quite how this notion of perfect confidence is supposed to relate to the token beliefs of Christians (i.e. descriptively, or normatively). Epistemologists often categorise different species of certainty: saliently, psychological and epistemic. According to Baron Reed,[92] psychological certainty refers to the firmness with which a believer holds a belief, whereas epistemic certainty refers to the positive epistemic status which the belief enjoys for her. It is tempting to say that according to Catholic doctrine, a believer who is given the grace of divine faith will both possess complete confidence in revealed truth, and that this will be an epistemically fitting psychological attitude given the perfect degree of justification/warrant with which her beliefs are held. However, two difficulties present themselves. Firstly, as Aquinas notes, not all Christians hold their religious beliefs with perfect certainty; yet Scripture claims that even such believers have faith. [93] It might seem, therefore, that the above texts should be taken as referring to epistemic certainty. If some Christians fail to believe with psychological certainty, one might think that this is due to a failure to proportion their credence to the positive epistemic status of their beliefs. Whilst it seems hard to understand how this could happen if Christian beliefs possess perfect "internalist" justification, perhaps the cause of the believer's lack of certitude could be a sinful disinclination to believe wholeheartedly. Yet this position verges on implying that Christians who believe with less than perfect psychological certainty are culpable for their level of belief. Although my model of faith below might make this somewhat plausible, this is hard to swallow given the testimony of otherwise saintly Christians who experience periods of sustained doubt. Perhaps the solution to this difficulty is elucidated by Plantinga, who suggests that whereas when the IIHS is functioning perfectly Christians will hold their beliefs with perfect firmness, many may not embody this ideal model of faith. This may be the manner in which we should interpret dogmatic statements on the certainty of faith. Perhaps, these refer to the fact that paradigm instances of divine faith, when a believer's cognitive

[92] Baron Reed, "Certainty", Edward N. Zalta ed. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/certainty/>.
[93] STIIaIIae5.4.

mechanisms are functioning perfectly, her beliefs will have a perfect degree of credence, which is epistemically appropriate. When the cognitive mechanisms of believers function less fully (perhaps, since God bestows grace less liberally for the time), Christians may lack perfect psychological and epistemic certainty in their faith.

Secondly, when the Catechism refers to faith as certain, it quotes Newman to the effect that for one with faith, "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt".[94] This refers to a property ascribed to faith in Catholic doctrine distinct from "certainty" as defined above, which I term "rational tenacity". A belief is held with greater rational tenacity, the more difficult it is for it to be defeated by evidence acceptable according to a believer's current epistemic lights. Accordingly, rational tenacity refers to the difficulty with which a believer can lose "internalist" justification for her beliefs. Of course, there might be easier ways to change beliefs than producing defeaters for them- for example, by brain-washing. Perhaps such an alteration to a cognitive system would produce beliefs with great warrant than previous beliefs enjoyed. But the susceptibility to having one's beliefs changed in these ways does not make them less *rationally* tenacious, since will not be an epistemically acceptable method of belief-formation according to the believer prior to such treatment. As with certainty, Catholic doctrine affirms that faith has a perfect degree of rational tenacity.[95] Perhaps, though, that this claim is also best interpreted as referring to paradigm cases of faith rather than to every instance of faith.

Finally, the Church teaches that faith is meritorious, and a matter of *choice*.[96] The Catechism quotes Aquinas: "[b]elieving is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace". [97] Two ecumenical councils suggest the role of the will in coming to

[94]*CCC* 157/p.39; Newman, *Apologia* 239.
[95] Innocent XI condemned the proposition that a person could prudently withdraw a supernatural act of assent (Denzinger, 2120), and *Dei Filius* (Canons III.6; Denzinger, 3036) condemned the proposition that "the condition of the faithful, and of those who have not yet attained to the only true faith, is on a par, so that Catholics may have just cause for doubting, with suspended assent, the faith that they have already received under the Magisterium of the Church, until they shall have obtained a scientific demonstration of the credibility and truth of their faith".
[96] For Catholics, faith traditionally refers to propositional assent to divine revelation. Accordingly, Magisterial teaching implies that such assent itself is free, rather than that the "freedom" of faith can consist of the human freedom to foster appropriate volitional responses to Christian belief, which Scott MacDonald suggests in, "Christian Faith" in Eleonore Stump ed. *Reasoned Faith*: *Essays in Philosophical Theology in Honour of Norman Kretzmann* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993).
[97] STIIaIIae2.9.

faith. Trent strongly hints at this in its discussion of the importance of the will in preparing the way for justification (which starts with faith) since it is able to freely reject God's offer of justifying grace,[98] whilst the First Vatican Council anathematises the view that "the assent of Christian faith is not a free act, but inevitably produced by the arguments of human reason".[99] There is no clear statement clarifying whether the Church means to endorse direct or merely indirect doxastic voluntarism concerning faith. However, I suggest that the will's control over belief is envisaged as being fairly immediate. Such a position is both consonant with tradition (see later chapters) and indicated by the fact that the last quotation could be read as affirming that the act of faith *itself* is a free act.[100] Such control is, perhaps, more immediate than typical examples of "indirect doxastic voluntarism" such as the project of gradually trying to attain faith by worship, or of choosing to examine arguments for Christianity's truth without intellectual resistance.[101] However, this does not mean that Catholics must endorse "direct doxastic voluntarism", depending on how that term is understood. It is not evident that Catholics must believe that faith is reached by a direct act of the will, as an action performable merely given the volition to do so, such as raising an arm. Rather, the above doctrinal pronouncements suggest that an exercise of the will somehow quite directly leads to the production of the act of faith, even if a mere volition to have faith is *per se* insufficient to produce it.

We can now review the properties of faith which Catholic doctrine ascribes to faith. Faith is a supernatural actualisation of an infused disposition (often reinforced by a habitually ordered way of life), by which truths are believed on the basis that God has revealed them. This assent, at least paradigmatically, enjoys the highest degree of credence and rational tenacity. Finally, the act of faith is the product of a fairly immediate, free decision to believe. A Catholic analysis of faith should account for all these properties of faith; I will now evaluate how successfully RE accomplishes this task.

[98] Trent- Session Six, particularly Chapters IV and V, and Canon IV (Denzinger 1524-5; 1554).
[99] *Dei Filius* Canons III.V (Denzinger, 3035).
[100] Cf. *Dignitatis Humanae* 10.7: "[t]he act of faith is of its very nature a free act" (Vatican II, 807).
[101] Admittedly, such a process would involve the will, so I cannot claim that such indirect voluntarism is entirely ruled out by the texts cited here.

2.2 The Advantages of Reformed Epistemology

RE has several facets to make it attractive to the Catholic theologian. Firstly, RE accounts for the fact that faith is divinely infused, as Catholic doctrine teaches. This is particularly obvious in Plantinga's account of the workings of the IIHS, which Plantinga calls "supernatural".[102] Moreover, as Laura Garcia suggests, it seems to offer a simple way to show that it is acceptable for Christians to hold their beliefs with a high degree of credence. [103] That such a degree of credence is intended by Reformed Epistemologists is implicit in their comparison between basic Christian beliefs and basic secular beliefs which are ordinarily held firmly. Moreover, Plantinga follows Calvin in referring to faith as "firm and certain knowledge",[104] and claims the IIHS (in paradigmatic instances) makes the gospel seem "clearly true, obvious, [and] compelling".[105] Admittedly, Catholic doctrine teaches that the existence of God can be known by natural reason, [106] and that revelation in Christ is rendered at least morally certain by historical evidence for Christ's miracles.[107] Whilst such claims are compatible with RE, they might render RE unnecessary as a means of showing that Christian faith can be rational.

Yet even so, Reformed Epistemology has two benefits for Catholic theology. Firstly, it suggests to a non-believer that Christians are not obviously (at least, from their own perspective) irrational in their faith, even if the non-believer deems arguments for Christianity flawed. Secondly, whilst the success of apologetic arguments might mean that the beliefs of Christians are theoretically open to justification by the project of Christian apologetics, it does not entail that they are actually held with justification on this basis. RE, by contrast, aims to show how Christian beliefs are actually rationally grounded. Catholic theologians should be reluctant to allow that many believers lack justification for their faith. As I explain below, Catholic doctrine claims that in at least paradigm instances of divine faith, believers are so strongly justified in their faith that they lack a rational obligation to abandon it

[102] Plantinga, *WCB*, 258.
[103] Laura Garcia, "Natural Theology and the Reformed Objection", in Steven Evans and Merold Westphal ed. *Christian Perspectives on Religious Knowledge*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 115.
[104] Plantinga, *WCB*, 256.
[105] Plantinga, *WCB*, 264.
[106] *Dei Filius* Canons, II.1; III.4 (Denzinger 3027; 3034).
[107] Catholic theologians sometimes assert that Vatican I taught that the existence of God could be demonstrated by philosophical arguments, although in fact the Council Fathers did not specify how God's existence can be naturally known- cf. Fergus Kerr, "Knowing God by Reason Alone: What Vatican I Never Said", *New Blackfriars* 91 (2010).

even in the face of apparently strong defeaters for Christianity. Since if a believer lacks justification for her faith it will not be irrational for her to abandon it in the face of even weak defeaters, the admission that many Christians are not justified in their faith would mean that their faith is highly deficient. As divine faith is necessary for salvation, this is would be a troubling admission. One might argue that Christians will mostly have beliefs which are doxastically justified if Christian apologetics is a successful project, because many Christians who are not proficient theologians themselves trust the judgement of theological experts in their communities that there are sound arguments for God's existence and His revelation in Christ. Obviously, this scenario depends on the arguments which apologists actually use being sound, which goes beyond Church teaching. Yet even if this is true, one might wonder whether it is appropriate, in pluralist religious environments, for Christians to place the judgement of Christian philosophers over their apparently equally competent secular peers.[108] RE bypasses such worries by claiming that Catholics may be justified in their faith even if it is not grounded in apologetic arguments.

2.3 Catholic Criticisms of Reformed Epistemology

Having explored ways in which RE tallies well with a Catholic understanding of faith, I now turn to several criticisms of RE made by Catholic philosophers.[109] These criticisms are largely motivated by the difficulties which RE has in accounting for the properties which Catholics maintain that faith possesses, as delineated above.

2.3.1 Faith Uncertain on RE

The first criticism of RE by Catholic philosophers which I shall explore is that charge that it fails to explain how Christian beliefs possess a high degree of certainty and rational tenacity.

[108] Cf. Lamont, *Divine Faith*, 188.

[109] In what follows, I focus on the concentrated response to RE voiced by Catholic philosophers around 1990, responding to the early development of RE. The critical response of Catholic philosophers may partly have been provoked by Plantinga's animadversions about natural theology (endorsed by Vatican I), and his claim in "Reason and Belief in God" that Aquinas was an "evidentialist" who endorsed "classical foundationalism". Since the mid-1990's, some Catholics have responded to RE more favourably, particularly given widespread claims that Aquinas' religious epistemology resembles RE as shall be explained in the fourth chapter – see e.g. Paul MacDonald, "A Realist Epistemology of Faith", *Religious Studies* 41 (4).

One objection that RE fails to accord sufficient rational tenacity to Christian beliefs is suggested by Thomas Sullivan[110] and Laura Garcia.[111] They note that since, on Plantinga's account, the justification of properly basic beliefs is only *prima facie*, it may be overridden by defeaters. In *WCB*, Plantinga assesses several potential defeaters for Christianity, including the existence of evil and the results of modern Biblical criticism.[112] I will not discuss the strength of such defeaters here. But even if current arguments against Christianity only offer weak reasons for disbelief, Christianity remains prospectively open to disproof by more cogent defeaters. Furthermore, believers may naively take current defeaters to possess substantial force. In his earlier work, Plantinga suggests a general method for Christians to rationally persevere in their faith in the fact of objections by way of reference to "intrinsic defeater-defeaters".[113] This is to say that sometimes, the initial warrant and credence with which a belief held is stronger than that which a potential defeater of the belief has for the believer. In such a circumstance, a believer challenged with such a defeater should rationally persevere in belief despite being unable to find a reply to the defeater. For example, if one has a strong belief from memory that one was absent from the scene of a crime, a witness' testimony to the contrary need not suffice to convince one that the memory is false.[114]

How much strength should the properly basic religious beliefs of Christians enjoy, relative to other beliefs? Plantinga envisages that the IIHS will produce very strong basic beliefs when it functions at full-throttle in "paradigmatic" cases. Against Catholic critics, Plantinga might therefore assert that (in paradigmatic cases), Christian beliefs produced by the IIHS will have a very high degree of rational tenacity. The believer will likely be internally justified in maintaining her beliefs because due to the

[110] Thomas Sullivan, "Adequate Evidence for Religious Assent" in Leonard Kennedy ed. *Thomistic Papers IV*, (Houston: University of St. Thomas, 1988), 71-93; 83-6.
[111] Garcia, "Natural Theology and the Reformed Objection", 115-18.
[112] Plantinga, *WCB*, 367-498.
[113] Alvin Plantinga, "The Foundations of Theism: A Reply", *Faith and Philosophy* 3 (1986), 311. This is perhaps Plantinga's take on a "Moorean Shift".
[114] In *WCB*, Plantinga's discussion of defeaters takes externalist turn, according to which (roughly) "belief *D* is a defeater of *B* for you if proper function requires giving up belief *B* when you acquire *D*" (Plantinga, *WCB* 362). Consequently, even if a believer with a barely functioning *sensus divinitatis* has greater credence in a defeater for theism than in its truth, she may not be justified (in an externalist sense) in abandoning theism, if the defeater for theism lacks proper-functionalist "warrant" (*Ibid*. 491). As I defined "rational tenacity", it refers to the difficulty with which a believer's belief can be defeated according to her current epistemic lights –i.e. how easily her "internalist" justification can be lost. Only Plantinga's early account of defeaters is therefore pertinent to the question of whether basic belief is rationally tenacious.

strength of her basic belief, she will have a powerful "intrinsic defeater-defeater" *per* Plantinga's early account of defeaters for Christianity. Yet Plantinga's rejoinder would not be entirely persuasive. Plantinga provides little evidence to show that the IIHS would, in paradigmatic cases, produce basic Christian beliefs with a high degree of credence. Perhaps, such high credence evinces a fanaticism unintended by God's design plan. Rather than having Christians possess intrinsic defeater-defeaters for Christianity, our epistemic design plan might mandate that we only form weak basic beliefs in Christianity, which must be buttressed against defeaters by argumentation acceptable to sceptics. In this case, it would be fanatics and not "paradigmatic" Christians who are insulated from defeat of their "internalist" justification. Plantinga does not, therefore, show that Christian beliefs need possess high rational tenacity since they are produced by the IIHS.

The problem of defeaters is particularly acute for Catholics given that the virtue of faith is supposed to involve assent to the whole set of the Church's defined doctrines, in the face of many alleged defeaters. A weakness of RE, from a Catholic perspective, is that it does not try to show that the denominational beliefs of Catholics possess significant justification/warrant. Although Plantinga attempts to show how Christians might develop warranted belief in the authority of Scripture,[115] he regards disputes over its interpretation as legitimate and difficult areas of enquiry.[116] Accordingly, the "certainty" of faith is restricted to mere-Christian faith in "great things of the gospel". Alston, meanwhile, focuses on showing the rationality of belief in the deliverances of CMP, which are broadly ecumenical. However, clearly this weakness of RE could be remedied by supposing that the IIHS produces the warranted basic belief that (e.g.) "Revelation is authoritatively interpreted by the Catholic Church".

Finally, there is a further problem for the certainty of Christian beliefs on RE. The driving force behind RE is an attempt to respond to various *de jure* objections to Christianity, which question whether Christian beliefs have either justification or warrant. The implication of this objection is that if, for all Christians can tell, they lack justification/warrant for their religious beliefs, they should

[115] Plantinga, *WCB*, 375-80.
[116] *Ibid*, 381-5.

lower their credences. Plantinga's response is to claim that if Christianity is true, something approaching the "Extended A/C Model" is likely true. On his model, the basic religious beliefs of Christians possess both justification and warrant. Accordingly, the *de jure* objection to Christianity is not independent of the *de facto* claim that Christianity is false. However, Plantinga supplies scant evidence for the claim that the "Extended A/C Model" is probably true if Christianity is true.[117] The evidence which Plantinga provides is twofold.[118] Firstly, he makes cursory appeal to Scriptural passages promising that the Holy Spirit will impart religious knowledge to Christians. [119] Whilst these passages offer some support for the promise that, on Christianity, God will guide Christians in their religious beliefs (such that their beliefs will have justification and warrant), it is not obvious which Christians they refer to; still less that the Spirit would instil properly basic religious beliefs in Christians. It is compatible with these texts that God might fulfil His promise by the Spirit providing sufficient evidence (*per* "classical foundationalism") to believers. Secondly, Plantinga invokes the authority of Aquinas and Calvin in support of the contention that God generates basic religious beliefs in Christians via the IIHS. These figures carry significant weight within orthodox Christian tradition. However, assuming that Plantinga has interpreted their thought correctly,[120] it should be conceded that other important figures in the tradition held that God provides justification and warrant for Christian beliefs by providing "evidence" for their truth.[121] In short, the "Extended A/C Model" is somewhat probable given Christianity, but not certainly true. It is probable that on Christianity, the beliefs of *some* Christians are warranted. However, for all Plantinga tells us, there is a significant probability that these Christians might believe on the basis of evidence acceptable to sceptics.

Accordingly, one might think that Christians who hold basic religious beliefs should moderate their confidence in Christianity, since they cannot be sure that even if true, their beliefs have

[117] Cf. William Craig and John Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, (Downers Grove Ill.: IVP, 2003) 267-9.
[118] Plantinga, *WCB*, 241-252.
[119] He mentions John 14:11, 14:26, 15:26; Ephesians 1:17-9 and 1 Corinthians 2:12-3.
[120] I explore the similarity of Aquinas' position to RE in Chapter 4. As for Calvin, some commentators allege that Plantinga over-estimates the importance Calvin places on the *sensus divinitatis* for Christian faith - cf. Georg Plasger, "Does Calvin Teach a sensus divinitatis? Reflections on Alvin Plantinga's Interpretation of Calvin" in Dieter Schönecker ed. *Plantinga's "Warranted Christian Belief": Critical Essays with a Reply by Alvin Plantinga* (De Gruyter, 2015), 169-89.
[121] Amongst Catholic theologians, we shall see that this is true of many Neo-Scholastics, and (with complications) Newman.

warrant/justification. This would constitute a weaker *de jure* objection to basic Christian belief. I am sympathetic to this contention, because of the "internalist" condition which I place on justification below. However, Plantinga might suggest that even if Christians who lack evidence for their basic beliefs still face something of a *de jure* objection to their beliefs, they will remain justified and warranted in believing with a high degree of credence. As regards "internalist justification", in paradigmatic cases, the basic beliefs of Christians are supposed to be so strong that they will provide an intrinsic defeater-defeater against most criticisms of Christianity, presumably including *de jure* objections. Secondly, Plantinga's later account of warrant does not maintain that a believer must be aware that her belief has warrant in order for it to have warrant.

2.3.2 Faith Not Chosen on RE

Another criticism of RE made by Catholic philosophers is that it provides insufficient role for the will in its account of coming to faith. Several Catholic philosophers attempt to provide secular philosophical reasons why religious belief ought to be in some way in control of the will. Linda Zagzebski, for example, suggests that on her "virtue epistemology", beliefs which count as knowledge are under indirect voluntary control, due to the analogy between knowledge (i.e. intellectual virtue) and moral virtue.[122] Similarly, James Ross notes that our engagement in basic doxastic practices is driven (and pragmatically, justified?) by our desire to obtain particular ends.[123] Finally, Laura Garcia observes that that many religious converts testify to the importance of a will to believe in their conversion.[124] Plausibly, therefore, Plantinga's account ought to include a greater emphasis on the will in order to more accurately describe the phenomenology of Christian converts.

Philosophical attempts to argue that models of religious-belief formation should accord a prominent role to the will are controversial. Susan Haack, for example, has suggested that there is a significant distinction between moral and epistemic virtues, particularly when it comes to their relationship to the

[122] Linda Zagzebski, "Religious Knowledge and the Virtues of the Mind", in Zagzebski ed. *Rational Faith*, 199-223.
[123] James Ross, "Cognitive Finality", in Zagzebski ed. *Rational Faith*, 235-7.
[124] Garcia, "Natural Theology and the Reformed Objection", 121.

will.[125] Moreover, as John Greco has argued, Zagzebski only endorses indirect doxastic voluntarism, and it seems possible that Plantinga's broad account of warrant can allow that the proper function of one's epistemic faculties depends upon one's long-term cultivation of intellectual virtue. [126] I argued above that, insofar as sin prevents the function of the *sensus divinitatis*, basic belief in God somewhat depends on our moral decisions. With regard to the function of the IIHS, since it is an infused cognitive mechanism, presumably one cannot voluntarily cultivate its exercise until it is infused. However, perhaps after one is given faith through the IIHS, one's cultivation of spiritual and moral virtues might promote its function. Thus, Plantinga's account can plausibly meet Zagzebski's modest voluntarist constraints on knowledge. Similarly, since for Plantinga, belief produced by the IIHS has a strong affective component, he can reply to Ross that a Christian's reliance on the IIHS is driven by love for God.[127]

In short, the philosophical case that RE allows too little room for the will is not particularly compelling. However, as Sullivan notes, it is Catholic dogma that the act of faith is determined by the will.[128] Furthermore, as John Cottingham argues, the fact in the Gospels Jesus commands his disciples to believe suggests that faith is a matter over which believers have control.[129] I argued above that the control implied by Magisterial teaching is fairly immediate. By contrast, RE envisages the will as having at most a highly indirect relation to Christian belief. I conclude, therefore, that the relatively involuntaristic understanding of Christian faith on RE is more of a theological than philosophical difficulty.

2.3.3 RE Insufficiently Internalist

Another charge against RE is that it does not demonstrate that Christian beliefs have enough in the way of "internalist" justification. I now review arguments for this complaint, focussing on those given by Catholic philosophers.

---

[125] Susan Haack, "'The Ethics of Belief' Reconsidered" in Steup ed. *Knowledge, Truth and Duty*, 21-33.
[126]John Greco, "Catholics vs Calvinists on Religious Knowledge", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (1) (1997) 13-34; 23-4.
[127] *WCB*, 290-323.
[128] Sullivan, "Resolute Belief", 118.
[129] John Cottingham, "Descartes and the Voluntariness of Belief", *The Monist*, 85 (3) (2002), 344.

Many Catholic epistemologists suggest an "internalist" constraint on knowledge or rational belief. Zagzebski argues for such a constraint from her endorsement of "virtue epistemology" mentioned above. [130] According to Zagzebski, right motivation- i.e. for attaining the truth- is important for proper belief, just as the motivation to behave ethically is important for moral behaviour. If someone lacks either motivation, there is something lacking in their epistemic or moral practice. Zagzebski suggests that this motivation ought to rule out the practice of *guessing* what the truth is, since guessing is not a reliable method for forming beliefs (and almost everyone should realise this). The problem with the deliverances of mechanisms such as Plantinga's *sensus divinitatis*, she continues, is that from the subject's point of view, the output beliefs are too much like "guesses". There is nothing to indicate to the subject that their belief possesses anything like "warrant". John Greco makes a similar point without reference to virtue epistemology when he suggests that a spontaneously formed belief that e.g. a tiger is nearby, without evidence that one's belief has been formed by some suitable mechanism, is unjustified even absent defeaters. [131] One might put the charge against Plantinga this way, "You say that a Christian is not necessarily guilty of acting against any epistemic duty. But this is false, since we have a duty not to accept the deliverances of doxastic practices which we have no reason to think are reliably truth-yielding."

Reformed Epistemologists can offer two responses to the suggestion that their religious epistemology is insufficiently "internalist". The first reply is that internalist contentions stipulating that in order for a belief to be rationally held, a believer must be aware that it is rationally held (or produced by a truth-directed and reliable doxastic practice) are false. Michael Bergmann has argued that if this condition were true, we would have to be capable of holding an infinite regress of beliefs.[132] Suppose that in order for a subject to be justified in holding to a belief, she must additionally believe that the belief has justification/warrant, so that from the believer's perspective, the belief is not merely a guess. Bergmann argues that it is surely not enough on this view that the subject has this second belief (i.e.

[130] Zagzebski, "Religious Knowledge", 212.
[131] John Greco, "Is Natural Theology Necessary for Theistic Knowledge?" in Zagzebski ed. *Rational Faith*, 176. Greco's example resembles Laurence Bonjour's famous "clairvoyant" counter-examples to externalism- cf. Laurence Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard UP, 1985), 37-52.
[132] Bergmann, *Justification Without Awareness*, 13 *et passim*.

that the original belief has justification/warrant) no matter what its epistemic status. This latter belief needs to be *justified*- otherwise, how does it appear any less of a "guess" than the original belief? But in that case, the justification of the initial belief will require a *further* (third) belief about the warrant of the formation of the second, and (since this third belief presumably also needs to be justified) so on *ad infinitum*. Bergmann suggests that in fact, we do not have an infinite number of occurrent or dispositional beliefs. Consequently, if Bergmann construes the "internalist" demand for accessibility correctly, none of our beliefs are justified on internalism. This is manifestly implausible; hence internalism is false.

Yet Bergmann's argument only seems probative against a positive demand that in order for a belief to be justified/warranted, it must be known to be warranted.[133] Perhaps, however, there is a more plausible, negative demand which can account for the intuition that beliefs which seem like guesses are unjustified, which both internalists and externalists can accept. The following is my suggestion for such a requirement:

No Guessing (NG): S's belief *b* lacks justification in proportion to the plausibility with which it could easily seem to S (given her current epistemic lights) that *b* is not formed on grounds[134] which reliably yield true beliefs.

Note firstly that this requirement should be acceptable to externalists who place a "no-defeater" requirement on justification. This is because even someone with no internally accessible grounds whatever for her beliefs might be strongly justified in those beliefs if she is not easily able to even consider the possibility that her beliefs are "guesses" not based on reliable grounds. Further, this requirement explains how in cases envisaged by Catholic objections to externalism, where a typical believer finds herself with a belief and no indication of its reliably truth-yielding provenance, the belief lacks much justification. In such cases, the believer would normally endorse the thought that the belief might not be reliably formed should at its mere suggestion.

[133] Cf. Greco, "Is Natural Theology Necessary?", 177.
[134] *NG* remains neutral between internalism/externalism about the location, nature and accessibility of these grounds. Likewise, *NG* is compatible with various interpretations of "reliability".

Unlike positive internalist constraints on justification, beliefs can retain justification given NG without any infinite regress of beliefs, even when believers can ponder whether their beliefs are reliably formed. One obvious way in which a belief can meet NG is if S has evidence that *b* is reliably formed. If S were to consider whether *b* is a guess, in that case, by her current epistemic lights, S should normally conclude that *b* is not so formed. But perhaps, Bergmann might object, the whole body of evidence which bears on the rational grounding of a belief could be brought into question (say, via sceptical thought-experiments), so that the original belief might again plausibly seem a matter of "guesswork".[135]

However, there are basic beliefs for which sceptics claim we have sketchy evidence for the reliability of their formation, yet which no amount of speculation makes seem a matter of guesswork. Such beliefs include the paradigmatic deliverances of sense-perception. Why, despite sceptical efforts, are these beliefs immune to defeat by the suggestion that they are guesses? One explanation is that basic beliefs formed in these ways very strongly seem to us to be true. As Patrick Lee notes, "seemings" generally indicate two things at once to the perceiver. [136] Firstly, they indicate the truth of what "appears" to be the case. Secondly, they indicate to the believer that the belief they produce is *appropriately* formed as a reaction to the truth; that the truth appropriately impresses itself upon them such that their belief is justified. This element of "seemings" is, I suggest, what Plantinga dubbed "impulsional evidence". On the basis of impulsional evidence, therefore, some basic beliefs have an intrinsic defeater-defeater against *de jure* objections which might occur to the believer. Applied to the case of NG, if a belief strongly seems to be the case to a believer, then it will not easily seem plausible to the believer that this belief is not reliably formed. If (given foundationalism), moreover, a believer's basic beliefs are rooted in such seemings, then the body of evidence which indicates that a belief is reliably formed will ultimately be based on such appearances. Accordingly, if a believer's

[135] Perhaps, though, the belief in question is the output of a "self-confirming" doxastic practice, the outputs of which testify to its own reliability. In that case, by a believer's current epistemic lights, it will not easily seem likely that the belief lacks warrant, even if the belief is not based on "impulsional evidence".
[136] Patrick Lee, "Evidentialism, Plantinga and Faith and Reason" in Zagzebski ed. *Rational Faith*, 145-6. Lee writes: "[I]n sensation…I do not just "find myself with a belief". Rather, I do have (or seem to have) an awareness of the essential warranting circumstances of those beliefs…[i.e.] that sensation is the presentation of the object itself." Compare Plantinga (*WCB*, 110) on "impulsional evidence": "the belief…seems *right, acceptable, natural*; it forces itself upon you; it seems somehow inevitable".

evidence for the reliability of a practice is anchored in such basic beliefs, it need not lack justification due to NG.

What about beliefs formed on the basis of weak impulsional evidence? NG dictates that these beliefs often have little in the way of justification, because it will seem plausible to the believer that they are guesses. However, perhaps there is a way in which beliefs formed on the basis of weak impulsional evidence can augment their justification (though perhaps not enough to justify firm assent), by falling less foul of NG. S might come to believe (including, on the basis of *b*) that if *b* is true, then it is formed by a reliably truth-yielding practice. In this case, since S believes *b* (albeit perhaps with an imperfect degree of credence), according to S's current lights, *b* is on balance likely not a lucky guess. This represents an improvement on S's justification for *b* if S did not believe that if *b* were true, it is reliably formed. In that case, she would take it as a live possibility that *even if she were correct* in believing *b*, *b* would not be appropriately formed.

If NG holds, the worries of Catholic philosophers that beliefs formed on Plantinga's version RE are too much like "guesses" can be presented even given externalism. Yet as Greco later argued, Plantinga's "A/C Model" arguably meets conditions such as NG, and posits the existence of internally accessible grounds for Christian belief.[137] According to Plantinga, basic beliefs have "impulsional" evidence: they seem to be true. In paradigmatic cases, this evidence is strong, so that given NG, these beliefs can have a high degree of justification.[138] Moreover, given the argument of *WCB*, even believers who lack strong impulsional evidence for the truth of the gospel can know that if their faith is true, it is warranted. If they believe the "Extended A/C Model" to be true, then by their epistemic lights, they are not "guessing" that the gospel is true, and consequently their beliefs can possess a fair degree of justification. However, I suggested above that Plantinga's argument for the likely truth of the Extended Model given Christianity is weak. If NG holds, the belief of Christians based on weak

[137] Greco, "Catholics vs Calvinists on Religious Knowledge", 23.
[138] But couldn't someone question the source or reliability of her impulsional evidence, such that beliefs formed on the basis of such evidence seem like guesses? This appears psychologically difficult, at least where beliefs are formed upon the basis of strong impulsional evidence. Sceptical efforts to undermine confidence in basic belief in the external world or the existence of objective moral values, for example, are rarely successful. This is perhaps because when one to have strong impulsional evidence in favour of a belief is just for it to be *evident* that the belief is appropriately formed.

"impulsional evidence" would be more justified if they were certain that if Christianity were true, such belief would be warranted. In general, therefore, complaints that Plantinga's project in *WCB* is too externalist are unfounded. Still, the internalist justification of basic Christian beliefs could be improved, were Christians to have more evidence that if Christianity is true, such beliefs are warranted.

2.3.4 Concluding Evaluation of RE

I conclude this section by considering the results of my comparison the properties of faith on RE to those accorded to faith by Catholic doctrine. The clearest problem with RE on dogmatic grounds is its failure to accord sufficient role to the will in generating faith. There are also more minor problems with RE's ability to account for the perfect certainty/rational tenacity of faith, and the ability of Christian belief to meet "internalist" constraints on justification on RE. In both cases, Plantinga's version of RE in particular can make a case that Christian belief possess firmness (in paradigm cases) and internalist justification. Yet Plantinga's lack of evidence for the likelihood of his "Extended A/C Model" on Christianity weakens these contentions.

3.0 Contemporary Catholic Models of Faith

We have seen above that whilst RE can account for many of the properties required of faith required in a Catholic religious epistemology, it leaves room for improvement on this score. However, many other Catholic analyses of faith face similar or worse difficulties from a doctrinal perspective. I shall now examine three analyses which purport to show how Catholic faith enjoys both internalist justification and warrant and argue that they likewise fail to deliver a theologically satisfactory religious epistemology.

3.1 Evidentialist Catholic Faith

The first model ("Evidentialist Catholic Faith", or ECF) simply suggests that Catholic faith is justified by being inferred from a probabilistic argument to the truth of Christianity acceptable to classical foundationalists. Assent to a proposition on the basis it is revealed by God through the Church is

justified/warranted because the believer's belief that the Church is the locus of revelation is based on the deliverances of natural theology and "motives of credibility".[139] This view can claim some Magisterial support by pointing to the insistence of the First Vatican Council that some such case can be soundly made.[140] Several Catholic philosophers who have criticised RE advocate this model of how faith is justified, such as Hugo Meynell,[141] and Henri Dulac.[142] Indeed, as Keith Mascord argues, some Christians apparently believe because they hold that their faith is supported by evidence acceptable to classical foundationalists.[143] It might seem that this is unfortunate for apologetic purposes, since it seems that on ECF, the way to motivate the thought that Catholicism is a rational intellectual position is recourse to the tortuous path of natural theology and historical argument. Still, if the above criticisms of Reformed Epistemology are sound, and no alternative models are forthcoming, ECF is perhaps what the Catholic philosopher is left with.

Unfortunately for this view, ECF clearly fails to achieve several of the desiderata outlined above. Firstly, as Garcia[144] and Sullivan[145] note, it seems unable to deliver on the certainty and rational tenacity required of Catholic faith. On the one hand, as Plantinga suggests, the project of grounding faith in philosophical/historical evidence will be rendered difficult by the latter's probabilistic nature.[146] Whilst Catholics will affirm that such a project is possible in light of *Dei Filius*, the fact that this case for Catholicism is probabilistic and open to defeat means that it likely cannot grant wholly rationally tenacious belief. This is because there is little to suggest that assent to the proposition that the Church is the locus of divine revelation grounded in philosophical and history evidence is not provisional: i.e. open to revision based on the perceived strength of the evidence in its favour, and

[139] A Scholastic term meaning arguments acceptable to our natural cognitive faculties (e.g. from natural theology, Christ's miracles, the beauty of Church doctrine) which render probable the proposition that God has revealed Himself through Christ's teaching as interpreted by the Church.
[140] *Dei Filius* II/III (Denzinger, 3005; 3009).
[141] Hugo Meynell, "Faith, Foundationalism and Nicolas Wolterstorff" in Zagzebski ed. *Rational Faith*.
[142] Henri DuLac, "A First, Incredulous Reaction to Faith and Rationality" in Kennedy ed. *Thomistic Papers IV*.
[143] Keith Mascord, *Alvin Plantinga and Christian Apologetics* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 146-153.
[144] Garcia, "Natural Theology", 116.
[145] Sullivan, "Adequate Evidence", 83-6.
[146] Plantinga argues that the structure of evidence for Christianity and the law of diminishing probabilities makes firm evidentialist Christian faith difficult (*WCB*, 268-80). For an evidentialist Christian response, cf. Timothy McGrew, "Has Plantinga Refuted the Historical Argument", *Philosophia Christi* 6 (2006) 7-26; Timothy and Lydia McGrew, "On the Historical Argument: A Rejoinder to Plantinga", *Philosophia Christi* 8 (2008), 23-38.

equally of preferred defeaters. Secondly, it seems unlikely that apologetic arguments will even produce the requisite degree of certainty with regards to the credibility of the authority of the Church if all defeaters fail, due to the probabilistic nature of arguments from (e.g.) historical sources.

Another problem with ECF is that it leaves little immediate role for the will in faith. Admittedly, many converts who believe on the basis of evidence might make a sustained commitment to fairly investigate the claims of the Church. But the decisions relevant to this commitment (e.g. to read certain books) seem fairly disconnected from any decision to believe. Rather, the conclusion of a potential convert's research will gradually impress itself on her mind in a manner which is immediately involuntary. Lastly, it might be remarked that this process does necessarily evince any mark of supernatural divine assistance. Academics frequently peruse comparable literature and come to various conclusions on similarly difficult and contentious matters. It seems odd to suggest that solely the act of belief based on study prior to faith is made under the influence of grace, given that belief based on such study is apparently identical to other, natural acts of belief. A defence of the necessity of grace for ECF is suggested by Lamont.[147] Perhaps, since humans are sinful, we are naturally biased against the conclusions of apologetic arguments, and thereby prone to become hypercritical in assessing them, such that their proper appreciation requires divine assistance.[148] Yet whilst this might be true for the few Christians who consider the motives of credibility at length, many Christians who hold to their faith on the basis of arguments may only have considered such arguments briefly or on the testimony of others, meaning that their intellectual efforts seem far less extraordinary and perhaps involve rather minimal exercise of the will.[149] In all, even if some Catholics

[147] Lamont, *Divine Faith*, 195.
[148] As shall be seen in a later chapter, Newman held a similar view.
[149] Still, faith might be a virtue or meritorious on ECF. For those engaged in evaluating the motives of credibility the correct evaluation of the arguments will be no small achievement if, as Plantinga argues, we are sinfully prone to disbelief. Even those who merely believe that there is evidence for the truth of Christianity on the consensus of relevant authorities (as might have a medieval peasant) might have as much virtue as those who are brought up in particular societies where certain the temptations to commits certain acts are weakened by widespread education on the harm of such actions . Lamont (*Divine Faith*, 191) argues that even if on this model, faith is sometimes virtuous, it is not necessarily so, since one might study the motives of credibility diligently for some vicious end. However, even in the case of the model of divine faith which I shall ultimately propose below, one might make trusting the teaching of the Church a basic and fundamental epistemic practice for some nefarious reason. This is consistent with Trent's claim that faith *per se* is not destroyed by the absence of love for God and neighbour- cf. Session 6 Cannon XXVIII (Denzinger, 1578).

possess what might be termed "natural" faith, further account should be given of that variety of faith which meets what the Church has to claim about faith's supernatural status.

3.2 Pragmatic Catholic Faith

One attempt to show how this might be done is proposed by Patrick Lee[150] and Thomas Sullivan.[151] These philosophers allege that what motivates the resolute belief of Catholics should not solely be the strength of evidence for the Church's claim to teach revealed truth, but also the judgement that it is prudent to believe more firmly than the evidence warrants. Accordingly, whilst Catholic faith has some epistemic justification/warrant, the justification for believing with a high degree of credence is principally pragmatic. Lee gives the example of someone about to be married, who prudentially cultivates a trust in the sincere intentions of his bride beyond what the evidence indicates, to more likely enjoy marital bliss. For Sullivan, it is the apparent obligation to believe firmly enjoined upon Christians by God that makes the latter practically reasonable.[152] Both philosophers, however, require *some* positive balance of overall evidence for their examples to work. In Sullivan's case, the obligation is contingent on God's existence, and so if the latter seems unlikely, then the action of belief may be imprudent. Lee, meanwhile, notes that Catholics reject consequentialism and often adhere to "natural law" theories of ethics, which require that one show "all of the human goods…respect…at all times".[153] In Lee's view, the possession of truth is such a good. Consequently, believing without evidence or in the face of contrary evidence is immoral, even if done for an important end. Belief has the possession of truth as a natural *telos*, and guesses or beliefs held in the face of evidence are not directed towards this goal. Prudential belief, in his view, therefore requires evidence.[154] In addition to apologetic evidence which grounds ECF, Sullivan suggests that those who make the decision to believe and engage in Christian spirituality often receive "internal" evidence of Christianity's truth, feeling God's presence in prayer and in the practice of Christian living, etc.

[150] Lee, "Evidentialism, Plantinga, and Faith", 152-63.
[151] Sullivan, "Resolute Belief", 125.
[152] Sullivan, "Adequate Evidence", 90-3.
[153] Lee, "Evidentialism, Plantinga", 154.
[154] I will not defend Lee's underlying position on natural law here, but many Catholics will find it sympathetic.

Can this model of "pragmatic" belief account for the properties of divine faith? Notably, this model improves on ECF in two ways. Firstly, it allows greater role for the will. Whilst Lee and Sullivan do not give a detailed phenomenological account of coming to faith, the choice to commit oneself to an end for pragmatic reasons manner is plausibly often less instinctive than the formation of a belief from gathered evidence. The believer might have to commit herself to a programmatic participation in faith in order to make her assent more instinctive, and to acquire "interior" evidence for Christianity. Further, this account explains how merely probable evidence can yield strong confidence in Christianity. Finally, by appealing to secular examples of trusting beyond the evidence, these models make the task of Christian apologetics more manageable by rendering it only necessary that a favourable balance of evidence can be accrued in favour of Christianity for resolute Christian faith to be rational.

However, Lee and Sullivan's model fails principally upon the point at which their criticism of ECF begins: it cannot explain the degree of rational tenacity ascribed by the Church to paradigm instances of faith. If the prudence of faith rests upon an evidential case for Christianity, were that case to be rebutted, Christian faith would cease to be rational. And yet this seems possible on this model. Sullivan recognises this problem, and concedes the point. He claims that the rational tenacity required of Catholics only extends to holding to believing with a high degree of credence based on evidence and prudence, and on this basis believing that faith will not be defeated by forthcoming evidence; rather holding an intellectual position whereby defeaters will be regarded as lacking any epistemic force.[155] However, given the dogmatic pronouncements cited above, the Church plausibly suggests a firmer degree of rational tenacity: on which "a thousand difficulties do not make a doubt". Indeed, Christians are continually encountering fresh evidence concerning their faith. It seems, therefore that on a "higher" intellectual level which "stands back" from the prudential assent to the faith, there would be a constant reassessment of the endeavour to believe, which is hardly conducive to the mental stability which a life of faith requires. Further, it is questionable as to what extent belief can be said to be supernatural on this model, since it does not generally require grace to believe more firmly

[155] Thomas Sullivan, "A Reply to Russman" in Russman ed. *Thomistic Papers V*, 93-4.

than the evidence warrants for the sake of an important end. One might, however, argue that grace is necessary for the believer to assent with the particularly high level of credence and rational tenacity which characterise divine faith.

3.3 Insightful Catholic Faith

The final current model for Catholic belief is what I shall call the "insight" model. It is discussed (from an Anglican perspective) by Austin Farrer,[156] and finds Catholic endorsement from Thomas Russman[157] and Garth Hallett.[158] Similar positions were espoused by Pierre Rousellot and John Henry Newman, as I will illustrate below. On this model, belief in God or the authority of the Church is rationally grounded by evidence acceptable to classical foundationalism. However, unlike ECF, the insight model suggests that it is not necessary for a believers' faith to be justified/warrant that she is able to explain to others (or even understand for herself) *how* the evidence she takes to provide justification for her beliefs gives them evidential support. Hallett cites the example of the momentary gaze that a mother gave her child in his presence. Witnessing this glance, he immediately formed the firm belief that the mother loved her child. Unlike a "basic belief", he formed this belief upon evidence provided by the glance. Hallett admits that he was quite unable to specify which aspect of the mother's features made the look loving, or to draw adequate comparisons between her features and other glances which evince love. Yet it seems that Hallett's belief was formed perfectly rationally. Indeed, when such beliefs are formed by socially attuned-subjects, they have not only internal rationality, but also warrant. But would such an inference from evidence to Christian faith seem like a matter of guesswork to the believer, violating my NG requirement on justification? It seems not. The Church teaches that certain motives of credibility provide strong evidence for the locus of divine revelation. Accordingly, a believer who is aware of this, and takes her evidence base to be similar to these arguments (though she cannot fully elucidate them) may conclude that her intuitive belief is likely founded on an instinctive grasp of sound arguments. Indeed, the First Vatican Council describes

[156] Austin Farrer, "Faith and Evidence", in Susan Howatch ed. *Saving Belief* (London: Mowbray, 1994).
[157] Thomas Russman, "'Reformed Epistemology' in Kennedy ed. *Thomistic Papers IV,* 190; "A Faith of True Proportions: A Reply to Sullivan" in Thomas Russman ed. *Thomistic Papers V* (Houston: Centre for Thomistic Studies, 1990).
[158] Garth Hallet, *A Middle Way to God* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), e.g. 66-78.

certain motives of credibility as "adapted to the intelligence of all", [159] which might suggest that they make rational the faith of even those who can only partially glimpse how they constitute evidence for the faith.[160]

This model is an improvement on the previous models regarding the desiderata outlined above. Firstly, it might be the case that the "insightful" believer takes the motives of credibility to so strongly support Catholicism- indeed, with strength greater than that which she can rationally elucidate- that she will have a high degree of confidence in its claims. A believer may not have *total* certainty or rational tenacity in faith, but perhaps sufficient certainty to approaches that which characterises divine faith. One might also speculate that the "insight" that is obtained by those who believe in this way is only obtainable by grace. However, the principle problem with this model is that there is insufficient for the will in coming to faith. There is little to suggest that the "insight" is not immediately attained, or that it can gained or supressed by volition.[161] Whilst, therefore, the "insight" model is the most fruitful alternative endorsed by Catholic critics of RE, it too is a deficient account of supernatural faith by Catholic criteria.

4.0 Warranted Catholic Belief

I now lay out a model for "supernatural" faith which meets the desiderata listed above, drawing heavily on the work of Reformed Epistemologists. I dub this model "Counter-Reformed Epistemology" (CRE). On CRE, a Catholic makes believing in accordance with revelation entrusted to the Church a basic doxastic practice- that is, a practice that is not justified by any other.[162] According to Catholic doctrine, revelation entrusted to the Church has several forms, receiving authoritative expression in Scripture,[163] which the Church interprets through the lens of tradition.[164] Occasionally, the Church formally defines a doctrine taught by Scripture/tradition, which definition

[159] *Dei Filius*, III (Denzinger, 3009).
[160] *CCC* 156/p.39 applies this to all of the motives.
[161] Other than perhaps by the believer immediately and deliberately forgetting the relevant evidence. For those often reminded of the evidence, this would be difficult; and the process of coming to faith largely involuntary.
[162] Since the faith involved here is explicitly Catholic, the believer assents to divine revelation as transmitted by God through the Church. CRE does not claim, however, that explicitly Catholic faith is the only species of "divine" faith (cf. Plantinga, *WCB*, 376). I outline another species of divine faith in the next chapter.
[163] *CCC* 101-108/pp.28-30.
[164] *CCC* 80-2/p.25; 113/p.31.

Catholics must accept (like the teachings of Scripture and tradition) with perfect certainty and rational tenacity.[165] Both the composition of Scripture and the Church's authoritative interpretation of revelation are guided by the Holy Spirit,[166] ensuring that they faithfully transmit divine revelation. Accordingly, the practice of belief in the Church's doctrine is self-justifying. That is, since the Church teaches that belief in line with her own Scriptures/definitions is always a reliably truth-yielding practice, one engaged in the practice will regard it as reliably truth-directed. I term engagement in this basic doxastic practice "Catholic faith". Catholic faith is not natural for humans. It requires a disposition to engage in the relevant doxastic practice in a basic manner- i.e. even if one can see no reasons not derived from the practice itself to engage in it. This amounts to having a first-order inclination to making assent to Catholic dogma just since it is taught by the Church a basic doxastic practice. Indeed, the relevant disposition draws the believer to make assent to doctrine proposed by the Church a *fundamental* epistemic practice- that is, one which cannot have its outputs overridden or altered by those of any other practice/s.[167] Further, the adoption of Catholic faith requires an exercise of the will. In our fallen state we have a disposition to make other doxastic practices fundamental when forming religious beliefs- such as those practices recommended by "classical foundationalism". In order to accept the truths proposed by the Church supernaturally, therefore, the will must decide between these competing dispositions. This decision will be ongoing, requiring the constant co-operation of the will, which facilitates the adoption of faith- or unbelief- as an intellectual habit. When the believer does believe in line with the practice of Catholic faith, her beliefs ought to have justification and warrant. They possess internalist justification, since they will seem to be true and

[165] More frequently, the Church expounds the meaning of revelation through the exercise of the "ordinary magisterium". Whilst the exercise of the ordinary magisterium is not infallible, Catholics are asked to accept these propositions with a high degree of credence. Cf. *CCC* 888-892/pp.206-7.

[166] *CCC* 93/p.27; 105/p.29.

[167] Some points of clarification are required here. Firstly, since no truth violates the laws of logic, the practice of believing in accordance with whatever are (*de re*) the laws of logic is in some sense always a fundamental practice, which Catholic faith cannot supplant as fundamental. However, a believer might find herself tempted to consider some Catholic doctrine logically impossible on the basis of her best attempts at believing in accordance with the canons of logic. In such a circumstance, CRE implies that she can nevertheless be rationally inclined to believe in the truth of the doctrine. Whilst recognising that the doctrine would be false were it logically impossible, she can believe that her best attempts at logical reasoning are flawed, and are not identical to the practice of forming beliefs in line with what are in fact the canons of logic. Secondly, when one makes some practice fundamental instead of another, one need not give up the latter practice, or even make the former practice fundamental when deciding upon the truth of every matter. Since the practice of consulting the Church's teaching will not be relevant to the formation of beliefs on many subjects, it will only be the fundamental epistemic practice of a believer in these areas.

reliably formed by the believer's epistemic light (see below). Further, they will be "warranted" since Catholic faith is, like Plantinga's IIHS, a properly-functioning and reliably truth-directed cognitive mechanism infused (on appropriate occasion) into believers by God.

4.1 The Doctrine Developed

This initial sketch of CRE needs development. I now explain the typical grounds (internal and external) on which a believer makes Catholic faith a basic doxastic practice, before continuing to describe the process by which a believer chooses to come to faith.

It is difficult to give an exhaustive account of the grounds which might trigger a disposition to believe in line with Catholic faith. Salient grounds external to the believer might include some of those listed in Plantinga's Extended Model such as prayer or reading Scripture; they may also include particular acts of worship prominent in Catholic tradition (e.g. Mass) or occasions upon which one is asked to make an explicitly Catholic confession of faith (e.g. reciting the Creed). From a phenomenological angle, those who have received God's gracious offer of Catholic faith find themselves inclined to accept propositions which are revealed by God through the Church simply because God teaches them. This inclination need not always be conscious, although since it is likely to come into conflict with other epistemic inclinations, it will likely become manifest to a believer as a cause of "cognitive dissonance". When conscious, this inclination does not typically consist of a simple desire to believe Church teaching, such that it might seem to the believer that the inclination to believe is a matter of wishful thinking. Rather, for the believer it typically "seems that" (i.e. she possesses impulsional evidence) that it is epistemically appropriate to form beliefs on the basis of revelation afforded to the Church. Alternatively, perhaps she forms a basic belief, grounded in "impulsional evidence" that the Church is the locus of divine revelation. On this basis, she infers that since divinely revealed propositions are certainly true, she ought to believe in line with the deliverances of Catholic faith. In "paradigmatic" cases, as *per* Plantinga's Extended Model, this "impulsional evidence" inducing the believer to make Catholic faith a fundamental doxastic practice is very strong.

If the mind feels inclined to adopt the doxastic practice of Catholic faith, then why are religious beliefs not immediately adopted on this basis? This is because we also have a disposition, which feels similarly truth-directed, to make other epistemic practices fundamental when forming religious beliefs. In particular, humans are inclined to set up some combination of the practice/s of logical reasoning, sense-perception and memory as their fundamental practice/s. It might seem that even if such an inclination exists, it will only have the opportunity to interfere with the cognitive outputs of the practice of divine faith if one rejects the motives of credibility and judges by the light of "natural reason", that it is improbable that the Church is the *locus* of revelation. However, if one makes a doxastic practice other than Catholic faith fundamental when deciding upon religious beliefs, one's credence that God has revealed particular doctrines through Christ and the Church will likely not be perfect. By contrast, if one makes Catholic faith one's fundamental doxastic practice one will believe that proposition (and likewise Church doctrine) with certainty. This is because according to Catholic faith, propositions proposed for belief in Scripture and by authoritative Church teaching are revealed by God, and therefore certain to be true. Accordingly, divine faith is often in conflict with other epistemic practices. However, if by "natural" faith one judges that God has likely revealed Himself through the Church, this conflict will be less intense, and one will be less disinclined to make the practice of Catholic faith fundamental on the basis that one is also attracted to make other doxastic practices fundamental when forming religious beliefs.

Given that one might find oneself in a situation with these competing inclinations to dis/believe a proposition (with a particular degree of credence), how will one decide to form a belief on the matter? Perhaps, it is a matter of simply focusing the mind's eye on the truth-directed attractiveness of believing in line with one faculty, and declining to focus on the attractiveness of engaging in the alternate epistemic practice. One might simply suspend belief, being uncertain as to which practice should be fundamental. But the inclination to decide one's position in accordance with one practice or other may be stronger than any inclination to suspect judgement.

This does not mean, however, that believers necessarily adopt a consistent policy of making Catholic faith their fundamental doxastic practice. Firstly, believers may only form particular beliefs, on

particular occasions, in line with Church teaching. Secondly, rather than believing propositions with the degree of credence with which either Catholic faith or the evidence of their natural cognitive faculties suggest by themselves, believers may choose to "split the difference", by proportioning their degrees of credence in revealed propositions to an aggregate of their likelihood according to Catholic faith and a secular evaluation of their plausibility. I discuss the rationality of such a procedure below. Importantly, however, I suggest that on CRE, those believers who fail to consistently adopt Catholic faith as a fundamental epistemic practice do not entirely lack the virtue of faith; rather, they exercise it imperfectly.

CRE accounts well for the properties which the Church ascribes to faith. Firstly, Catholic faith is certain and perfectly rationally tenacious on this model. According to the Church, the Magisterium cannot err in matter of dogma. Therefore the believer with Catholic faith, in determining the degree of probability to accord to relevant dogmatic propositions will give them the highest possible level of credence.[168] Moreover, since the relevant epistemic practice is adopted as *fundamental*, nothing (save a will to unbelief) need shake the confidence of the believer in their faith, at least in paradigm cases.[169] In cases where a believer adopts the doxastic practice of Catholic faith half-heartedly, she will at least have a tendency to believe with perfect certainty and rational tenacity insofar as she engages in the practice. As illustrated above, faith will be a supernatural virtue if held in this way, and also a matter of quite immediate choice. The practice of Catholic faith also passes my NG requirement on justification. Firstly, it is typically grounded in impulsional evidence. Secondly, it confirms its own reliability, so that from a believer's perspective, forming beliefs in line with Church teaching will not seem a matter of guesswork.[170]

[168] At least, in paradigm cases.
[169] i.e. because the output of the belief-forming practice cannot be challenged by the outputs of any other.
[170] It is not part of Catholic doctrine, however, that CRE is true or that belief that the Church is the *locus* of revelation is properly basic. If one only has weak impulsional evidence for the latter proposition, it might not have a high degree of internal justification given NG. But I argue below that Catholic tradition has often indicated the truth of something approaching CRE. Accordingly, a believer with weak impulsional evidence for making Catholic faith her fundamental doxastic practice can be quite confident that if Catholicism is true, her basic inclination to accept the truth of revelation through the Church is epistemically appropriate. Given her (admittedly, weak) Catholic faith, this should be enough to ensure that her faith has some internal justification given NG.

4.2 Problems with the Model

4.2.1 Direct Doxastic Voluntarism False

I now consider objections to CRE. The first objection is that the model is not credible, because it implies the truth of direct doxastic voluntarism. There are two ways to argue against direct doxastic voluntarism. One can either urge that whilst *a priori* possible, in fact humans lack such control over their beliefs,[171] or simply argue that it is not even possible. I contend that both such arguments are flawed, by outlining a credible account of how the believer chooses to believe on CRE. Bernard Williams[172] and Richard Swinburne[173] argue that direct doxastic voluntarism is impossible. Whilst their arguments differ in detail, they hinge on the thought that believing a proposition involves accepting the proposition on the grounds that the truth of the proposition- which is external to one's belief - is somehow appropriately linked to belief, rather than one's belief being a mere guess (compare "NG"). One might wonder whether this is logically necessary: presumably delusional people, or powerful non-human entities, could believe (in the latter case, with justification) that the world conforms itself to their beliefs. But *pace* Swinburne, most humans realise that the truth of things does not always correspond to their beliefs. Immediately choosing to believe a particular proposition immediately is impossible, the argument continues, because in doing so one is aware that one has merely adopted the belief by *fiat* rather than as a response to the external truth, and that this is no reliable basis for true belief. This does not rule out indirect voluntarism, since one might by choice acquire fresh evidence- or cause oneself to forget evidence- which leads one to form a particular belief. In such circumstances, one will feel that a particular belief is forced upon oneself by the evidence; although one might admittedly still have qualms about the choice one made to acquire particular evidence. Still, if one manages to forget about this choice, or if the newly acquired evidence is sufficiently strong, one might nevertheless be able to hold the new belief in good epistemic conscience.

---

[171] This appears to be Alston's position on the matter, and seems to be mainly the result of a difficulty in imagining himself being able to choose beliefs.
[172] Bernard Williams, "Deciding to believe" in Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self*, (Cambridge: CUP 1973).
[173] Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason* (Second Edition) (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 24-26.

I suggest that whilst it might appear that CRE involves direct doxastic voluntarism, either this is possible under rare conditions such as those discussed in my model; or CRE need only involve immediate indirect doxastic voluntarism. This might seem problematic. How can one fairly immediately convince oneself that something is true other than by obtaining new evidence? On CRE, the act of faith involves choosing between dispositions to make different doxastic practices fundamental. This conflict of dispositions may not occur consciously to a subject, as long as the deliverances of both practices coincide. However, suppose that they come into conflict. At this point, the agent will be motivated to make a decision in favour of one practice being fundamental, in order to decide which beliefs to hold. I suggested that if this conflict is resolved, it is by the "mind's eye" focusing on the "impulsional evidence" in favour of one practice. Since like bodily sight, the scope of intellectual vision is limited, this will induce a choice in favour of making use of one faculty at the expense of the other which appears epistemically appropriate. Alternatively, perhaps the will chooses to start engagement in one practice, leaving the believer to reflect (given her new beliefs) on the manner in which her newly adopted doxastic practice suggests its own reliability. As long as this continues, the decision as to which faculty is fundamental has been made implicitly, though perhaps often consciously. Once the choice between which mechanism is fundamental has been made, however, as long as the exercise of the relevant mechanism continues, it need not appear to the subject engaged in a practice that beliefs formed thereby lack justification/warrant. Reflecting on the choice to accept faith, the believer may feel lucky: it was perhaps a close-run thing as to which practice was adopted as fundamental. However, the mere feeling that one is lucky to have arrived at a situation where one can reliably discern true beliefs is not enough call one's beliefs into question. Again, one might well later be drawn back to the other belief-forming mechanism, requiring another choice. But in the long run, one will likely form a habit of faith or doubt, although one need not always be consistent in its employment.

4.2.2 Direct Doxastic Voluntarism Irrational

One might wonder whether, given this account of faith's generation, CRE makes faith irrational. Wouldn't it be- contrary to NG- a matter of guesswork for the believer to merely *choose* to make a doxastic practice fundamental? As outlined above, according to CRE, believers typically have impulsional evidence for making Catholic faith their fundamental doxastic practice. Consequently, such a choice would not entirely be a matter of guesswork. However, one might object that according to CRE, a believer also has impulsional evidence for adopting a rival set of doxastic practices as fundamental. Ordinarily, when we have competing intuitions or "appearances" (with comparable force) bearing on the truth of a proposition, we accord them each some value. We then determine our overall credence by taking both intuitions into account, e.g. by making our credence an average of the proposition's probability according to both intuitions, giving more weight to stronger intuitions. Were we to ignore one set of appearances, we would seem guilty of guessing by ignoring some of the ways in which truth seems to manifest itself to us, in favour of focussing on those which we prefer to focus on for reasons which are not truth-guided.

Applying this analysis, we might think that given the phenomenology posited by CRE, a believer ought to take into account both the impulsional evidence for making Catholic faith her fundamental doxastic practice, and that for making another set of practices fundamental; unless the former is far stronger than the latter. In practice, this might mean that when forming beliefs on religious subject, she would take an average of a proposition's probability according to both divine Catholic faith and her natural doxastic practices, giving some weight to both. Such a procedure would leave room for the will in forming beliefs, however. Plausibly, to properly the appreciate the impulsional evidence in favour of adopting the practice of Catholic faith as fundamental, one must focus the mind on it (and, as appropriate, countervailing impulsional evidence) as described above. Note that our principal method for checking the strength of intuitions is just by examining or focussing on them mentally, and it is therefore easy to forget the strength of an intuition, or to mistake another intuition as stronger, by a failure to properly focus on it in comparison to competing intuitions. Further, one might be able to

appreciate impulsional evidence only by "indirectly" choosing to foster one's spiritual development which may help one to feel such evidence.

Perhaps the above describes the rational procedure for forming beliefs given the believer's situation as envisaged by CRE. This is consistent, with the broad outline of CRE above, which allowed that believers might not consistently adopt Catholic faith as a fundamental doxastic practice. Admittedly, on this construal of CRE, only those with very strong impulsional evidence would be rational in adopting the practice of Catholic faith as wholly fundamental, with no competing faculties bearing on their credence in religious propositions. Given the emphasis placed on the certainty and rational tenacity of faith by Catholic doctrine, however, such cases might be viewed as paradigmatic instances of faith. Moreover, although most believers would form their beliefs only partially on the basis of Catholic faith in this interpretation of CRE, this need not preclude them having a very high degree of confidence in its outputs if the impulsional evidence for making Catholic faith a fundamental practice were high, and their natural judgement of the plausibility of Catholic doctrine moderately high.

However, maybe the typical way in which we mediate between competing intuitions of comparable strength bearing on a proposition is not the correct rational procedure in this case. Given that, according to CRE, it strongly seems to a believer that she should make either Catholic faith or some other practice *fundamental* (i.e. the final arbiter on the probability of religious propositions), it will consequently seem to her that by taking an average of these credences, she is bound to form a credence which is not proportionate to the most reliable method of forming religious beliefs . Similarly, the believer may note that pragmatically, either it would be objectively fitting to believe and act on the teachings of the Church wholeheartedly (if the Church really is the *locus* of revelation), or else that such belief and action would not be thus fitting. Believing according to an average of the outputs of Catholic faith and natural reason might therefore seem even more certain to yield false beliefs and inappropriate choices than making Catholic faith or natural cognitive processes one's fundamental practice. In other words, perhaps the choice to make Catholic faith a fundamental practice could be "live, forced and momentous", and so following William James, epistemically and

pragmatically permissible.[174] Such an interpretation of the rationality of choosing to make the practice of Catholic faith entirely fundamental by an act of will is not, though, central to CRE.

4.2.3 Catholic Faith Dependent on Natural Reason

Another objection to CRE is that Catholic faith cannot have perfect certainty or rational tenacity, because its exercise necessarily involves using other doxastic practices. Believers can only assent to Church teaching insofar as they are aware of its content by employing natural doxastic practices such as historical research, or believing on the basis of testimony.[175] However, this generates two difficulties for CRE. Firstly, it seems that if the exercise of Catholic faith essentially involves the exercise of natural doxastic practices, then its outputs cannot be believed with greater certainty than the outputs of the latter practices. For example, suppose that I believe that God is Triune since this proposition is taught by the Church, and believing in God's revelation through the Church is my fundamental doxastic practice when forming beliefs about God's nature. It appears that, even if I have supreme rational confidence that divine revelation through the Church is true, I can only be as rationally confident that God is Triune as I am (through human testimony, etc.) that the Church teaches the doctrine of the Trinity. This might appear to conflict with the Church's teaching that faith has complete certainty in paradigmatic instances, given that belief in the contents of Church teaching is not perfectly certain.

There are a number of replies which can be made to this objection. Firstly, many believers will have an extremely high rational credence that the Church teaches the broad outlines of what has historically been termed "orthodox Christianity". Few of our beliefs formed on the basis of historical testimony have greater certainty than the belief of informed parties that the Church proclaims Trinitarian doctrine. Even if such belief should fall short of complete confidence by certain evidentialist standards, our credence in the truth of such facts may be psychologically indistinguishable from our credence in propositions with greater evidence in their favour. Further, whilst the credence of believers that the Church teaches more abstruse doctrinal positions might be lower, they can still have

[174] Cf. William James, "The Will to Believe" in Gerald McCarthy ed. *The Ethics of Belief Debate* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).
[175] In Scholastic jargon, "*fides ex auditu"*- cf. Rom. 10:14-7.

non-inferential belief that whatever the God teaches through the Church is true. Thus a lack of complete certainty on individual articles of faith need not prevent the believer adhering to the doxastic practice of Catholic faith itself with complete firmness, such that they are completely certain that whatever the Church in fact teaches is true. Finally, it is plausible that God infuses into paradigmatic believers a non-inferential belief grounded in impulsional evidence that the broad outlines of Scriptural/Ecclesial teaching which they accept on the basis of testimony have been accurately passed on. These believers could then believe in the Trinity, on the basis that it is affirmed by the Church, with a higher degree of credence than that with which they would believe that the Church teaches Trinitarian doctrine on the basis of their natural cognitive faculties alone.

Perhaps, however, the fact that Catholic faith needs to make use of natural cognitive practices threatens its rational tenacity. Conceivably, for example, by using the same practices of historical research necessary to establish the content of Scripture/Church doctrine, a believer might discover firm historical evidence that Jesus' disciples faked the Resurrection. Given that she is committed to the practice of historical research when forming religious beliefs, surely it cannot be rational for her to disregard historical evidence against Christianity. Were she to do so, the reliability of the practice of belief in historically established facts should seem to her seriously undermined. Yet if so, she can hardly continue to make use of the results of this practice with much confidence elsewhere, as when forming religious beliefs in line with the Church's teaching as established by historical enquiry.

Of course, the outputs of even well-established doxastic practices are sometimes contradictory, and this does little to diminish our generally high confidence in their outputs. Indeed, since the deliverances of doxastic practices often correct errors generated by those same practices, this might not seem to be a problem. For example, I can use certain strong memories to adjudicate that other, weaker memories are false. Provided that this does not happen too frequently, and that I normally have methods of adjudicating between conflicting memories, this need not reduce my confidence in the reliability of my memory much; particularly regarding its reliability when it produces memories which seem to me particularly accurate. Doxastic practices can even correct their outputs (without destroying their own claim to reliability) by supporting the exercise of further doxastic practices

dependent on their use. Suppose, for example, that I believe myself to have heard a red kite in the distance. An ornithologist friend, much closer to me, assures me that it cannot have been a kite (there are none for hundreds of miles), and that it is more likely a buzzard. Whilst it is true that I must make use of my hearing to understand my friend, given that my confidence that I have heard him correctly is much greater than that I have heard a kite, I will believe him rather than the immediate evidence of my auditory sense. By parallel, perhaps a believer faced with historical evidence of apostolic fraud may nevertheless be far more confident that Scripture and the Church proclaim Christ's Resurrection than that the broader historic record proves this doctrine false.

In practice, I take it that despite the best efforts of sceptics, no objection to Catholicism is comparably evident to our natural cognitive faculties as is the truth that the Church teaches the basic doctrines that it has been historically supposed to teach. Nor does it appear likely that any such evidence against the truth of Catholicism will be forthcoming. If I am correct, Catholic faith can at least possess a very high degree of rational tenacity. However, it might be urged that if the historical evidence against Christianity were sufficiently strong and abundant, the reliability of historical research or testimonial belief in general would be severely undermined for someone if she were to believe such evidence misleading. Probably, since most believers do not adopt the practice of Catholic faith without reserve, most Catholics would cease to believe in the Resurrection in the face of powerful historical evidence for an apostolic conspiracy. This itself is not surprising on CRE. Yet it might seem more worrying for CRE that even saintly believers whose certain beliefs in the gospel constitute paradigm instances of faith ought to abandon their belief in such circumstances.

Perhaps this is no problem for CRE or any other Catholic model of faith, since a complete immunity to defeat in the face of any amount of any evidence acceptable to our natural cognitive faculties whatsoever is simply too much to ask of any human beliefs. If so, we should interpret the Church's teaching on rational tenacity merely to mean that divine faith enjoys an extremely high degree of rational tenacity. On the other hand, there might be a way in which a saintly believer might continue to rationally believe in the Resurrection on the basis that it is proclaimed by the Church. Suppose that a believer is given a strong basic belief by God, grounded in extremely powerful impulsional

evidence, that the evidence indicating an apostolic conspiracy was an unprecedented fluke of the historical record. God might infuse in the believer the rational belief that this evidence was, through sheer misfortune, highly misleading; although in ordinary circumstances, belief formed upon such evidence would certainly be true and rational. Accordingly, the believer could continue to be highly confident in her historical judgements pertaining to Church teaching and other secular matters, whilst regarding the historical record as misleading in that particular instance. Accordingly, it is possible- if God saw fit- that not even very strong evidence acceptable to natural cognitive processes could rationally defeat engagement in the practice of Catholic faith by a paradigmatic believer.

5.0 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the attempts of Reformed Epistemologists to construct a Christian religious epistemology, and evaluated their efforts from a Catholic perspective. I have judged that where they have been found wanting on theological grounds, they can be supplemented by a Catholic adaption of RE which I have termed "Counter-Reformed Epistemology". This analysis of faith can account better for the properties demanded of faith by Catholic doctrine than many alternative analyses of faith proposed by Catholic theologians. There remain, though, two shortcomings of CRE which I will address in the following chapters of this thesis. Firstly, as described above, CRE only gives an account of explicitly Catholic faith. It would be helpful for its credibility if CRE could also account for the existence of divine faith in non-Catholics (or better, a currently latent infused disposition to make an act divine faith under certain circumstances); particularly in "Anonymous Christians", whom the model might at first glance struggle to accommodate.[176] I address this

[176] One might object to talk of non-theists possessing theological virtues such as "divine faith". These virtues seem in part to consist of dispositions to form mental states consciously directed to God e.g. the disposition to believe propositions on the basis that God has revealed them (faith) or the desire for union with God and to follow His will (charity); yet non-theists seem to lack these dispositions. Although I will only discuss the theological virtue of faith in detail (accounts of implicit hope and love might be sketched in parallel), my suggestion is not that non-theists can be said to possess theological virtues in the strict sense that they have presently-engaged and easily-triggered dispositions to form the appropriate mental states (e.g. belief in propositions *qua* revealed). Rather, I argue that given their engagement in certain practices through the aid of grace, non-theists may have more distant infused dispositions to form the requisite mental states. These dispositions might be triggered by deeper reflection on/revelation of the nature and presuppositions of those current practices. However, since these dispositions have not yet been triggered and may indeed only be triggered post-mortem, non-theists can only be said to possess the theological virtues in an attenuated sense. For illustration, see my discussion of the difference between dispositional beliefs and dispositions to believe in the

shortcoming in the next chapter. Secondly, as with Plantinga's "Extended A/C Model", I have not provided much evidence that CRE holds if Catholicism is true.[177] Given this, believers with weak impulsional evidence to adopt Catholic faith as a basic doxastic practice might wonder if they are irrational in doing so, even given the truth of their faith. One way to answer this shortcoming is to show that CRE has considerable precedent in Catholic theological tradition. The remainder of my thesis will attempt to demonstrate that "Counter-Reformation Epistemology" is well-grounded in Catholic tradition.

following chapter (1.2.6), which I apply to Rahner's theology of Anonymous Christianity via the criticism of DiNoia and others (1.3) and use to explain the import of my own model of Anonymous Christianity (3.0).

[177] Although CRE's ability to account better for the properties of faith than its competitors provides some evidence of its truth.

Chapter Two: Implicit Faith

1.0 Introduction

In the first chapter, I developed a Catholic model of divine faith ("Counter-Reformed Epistemology"), inspired by the work of "Reformed Epistemologists". In this chapter, I investigate the compatibility of CRE with the thesis of "Anonymous Christianity" that non-Christians and even atheists can have salvific, supernatural faith in Christ and the teachings of His Church. I will first examine the work of the mid-twentieth century Jesuit Karl Rahner, who coined the term "Anonymous Christianity" and developed a fully-fledged account of faith and grace to explicate its possibility. I shall argue that whilst Rahner's basic thesis that Anonymous Christianity should be deemed a possibility by Catholics has warrant and can be defended from some objections of his contemporaries, his account of its workings is problematic for Catholic theologians, and in tension with his own theological commitments. Seeking inspiration for an improved model of the function of anonymous Christianity compatible with my own model of faith, I turn to the work of Rahner's contemporary Hans-Urs von Balthasar, who drew strong analogies between faith and aesthetic judgement. Whilst not accepting von Balthasar's account of faith wholescale, I suggest that it can inspire a more plausible model of anonymous Christianity. Finally, since my suggestion will involve the assertion that a disposition to make belief on the basis of moral/aesthetic judgements a "fundamental" doxastic practice is widespread even in atheists, I will briefly note examples which illustrate this tendency in modern philosophy.

1.1 Anonymous Christianity and Catholic Doctrine

The term "anonymous Christian" was popularised by Rahner to describe the possibility of those who hold no explicit belief in the tenets of Christianity nevertheless having an "implicit", saving faith in Christ.[1] Although the thesis of Anonymous Christianity entails nothing about *what sorts of people* may possess implicit faith, in Rahner's view this possibility extends to non-theists.

[1] For the term's background, cf. Eamonn Conway, *The Anonymous Christian- A Relativised Christianity?* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993), 5-11.

Within Catholic theology, Anonymous Christianity is a response to an evolving discussion about the possibility of salvation without baptism.[2] Although the earliest Church fathers seem to have held that baptism in water is absolutely necessary for salvation, soon the view developed that catechumens who were martyred before baptism underwent a "baptism of blood". Later, it was maintained that merely the explicit desire for baptism (*votum baptismi*) sufficed for those born after Christ.[3] Following the discovery that swathes of the world's population remained unevangelised after Christ's coming, by the mid-nineteenth century a consensus had emerged that despite the Magisterial teaching that there is "no salvation outside the Church", it is possible for those in a state of non-culpable ignorance of their duty to become Catholic to have "implicit" faith in Christ. It was envisaged that this involved individuals believing in God, and committing themselves to following His commands as revealed in natural law and what they non-culpably regarded as revelation. This position received Magisterial endorsement in Pius IX's encyclical *Quanto Conficamur Moerore* (1863), which teaches that the "invincibly ignorant" who are prepared to obey God can be saved by grace, since "God…will not permit…anyone… not guilty of a voluntary fault to suffer eternal punishment".[4] Similarly, the Vatican condemned Leonard Feeney's view that non-Catholics cannot be saved by referring to an "implicit" desire for baptism on the part of non-Catholics, which when united to infused faith and charity allows for salvation.[5]

One could characterise the notion of "implicit" faith, which is similar to the implicit desire for baptism mentioned in the latter document, as akin to *de re* belief.[6] Someone who commits herself to

[2] For further historical background cf. John Pasquini, *Atheism and Salvation: Atheism from the Perspective of Anonymous Christianity in the Thought of Revolutionary Mystic and Theologian Karl Rahner* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000), 77-87; Francis Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church: Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (London: Chapman. 1992); Stephen Bullivant, *The Salvation of Atheists and Catholic Dogmatic Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 43-76; and Rahner himself in *Theological Investigations* (23 vols.; hereafter, *TI*) (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961-1992) Vol. 2, "Membership of the Church According to the Teaching of Pius XII's Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis'", 1-88.

[3] Those born before Christ were typically thought to have "implicit" faith in Him. Cf.STIIaIIae.2.7-8.

[4] *Quanto Conficiamur Moerore*, 7 (Denzinger, 2866).

[5] Denzinger, 3866-73.

[6] The distinction between *de dicto* and *de re* belief will become important below. As I use the term, the *de dicto* content of a belief is specified by the correspondence between its form as it is explicitly held by the believer and the proposition believed. Thus I have an occurrent *de dicto* belief that "the woman in the corner is wearing pink" just by affirming a conscious thought of the form "the woman in the corner is wearing pink". Objects described in *de dicto* beliefs often have real-world referents. This means that one can believe something *of* an object without believing that one has picked out that object in particular by a description offered in a *de dicto* belief.

obeying God's commands has a desire to believe and obey divine revelation. Since God has in fact revealed Himself in Christ and instituted the Church as Christ's body, such a person has *de re* committed herself to accepting Christ and Church-membership. *De re* acceptance of the gospel would, on this construal, suffice for the salvation of those morally incapable of *de dicto* acceptance. However, it seems strange to say that a non-Christian commits herself to believe whatever God has revealed in general. What seems pertinent to faith is not what God has revealed in general, but what He has revealed to the believer. If so, perhaps "implicit" belief is better explained as a *disposition* to accept (*de dicto*) and obey Christian revelation if these things were revealed to one.[7]

However, in the typical Neo-Scholastic view, following Hebrews 11:6, *de dicto* belief in God as the Rewarder of those who seek Him is required to mediate *de re* belief in Christ. This view was linked to the teaching of *Dei Filius* that belief in the existence of God is attainable by natural reason, rendering those lacking such belief potentially culpable for their rejection of God's universal offer of salvation. Since it seemed difficult to hold all non-theists culpable for disbelief, some Neo-Scholastics conjectured that God would grant miraculous revelations (e.g. *pre-mortem* visions) to those who sincerely tried to follow natural law.

Yet the Second Vatican Council clarified that non-culpable non-theists can also attain the beatific vision, by grace, without even minimal *de dicto* faith in God. Rahner cites several texts from the Council which confirm this view.[8] In particular, he notes *Lumen Gentium* II.16 : "Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and

---

Thus, I can believe *of* Sally (who sits in the corner) that she is wearing pink, just by believing *de dicto* that "the woman in the corner is wearing pink". In an attenuated sense, it therefore seems appropriate to say that I believe (i.e. *de re*) that "Sally is wearing pink". I will say that when one has *de dicto* belief in a proposition which refers to certain objects, one likewise has *de re* belief in any proposition which substitutes the descriptions of those objects with their actual referents.

[7] The Holy Office's condemnation of Feeney suggests this interpretation- "God also accepts an implicit desire [for baptism], so called because it is contained in the good disposition of soul by which a man wants his will to be conformed to God's" (Denzinger, 3870). I discuss implicit belief in 1.2.4, below.

[8] *TI* 9, 147. The texts are: *Gaudium et Spes* I.12-21 (Vatican II, 913-22); I.22 para. 5, (Vatican II, 923); *Lumen Gentium* II.16 (Vatican II, 367-8); *Ad Gentes* 7 (Vatican II, 821).

with His grace strive to live a good life." In Rahner's view, the best interpretation of this text is that it establishes a parallel between non-culpable, non-Christian theists, whom it was already taught could be saved by implicit faith, and their non-theist counterparts. Moreover, it importantly suggests that some can be inculpably ignorant of theism, meaning that according to *Quanto Conficamur Moerore* they are capable of salvation. However, Vatican II does not explicitly endorse the theory that implicit faith mediates the salvation of non- Christians, rendering other accounts of their salvation possible.

Rahner argues persuasively that the possibility of supernatural salvation for non-theists is poorly accounted for by theories of supernatural pre-mortem revelations.[9] On such theories, the entire moral and spiritual life of the non-theist, however apparently rich and significant, is relegated to a mere *preparation* of character for the encounter with and decision concerning grace.[10] Three problems arise for *pre-mortem* vision theories. Firstly, one might wonder whether it is possible to regard the rich spiritual lives of certain non-theists as not at *some* level[11] positive and *conscious* attitudes towards God.[12] Secondly, on such theories, most of the spiritual lives of non-believers seem absurd, as they are only loosely related to their ultimate destiny. Consider, by analogy, pupils who spend an entire course working on particular subjects and developing certain skills, only to face a final examination on a different subject. The study of this subject requires a new set of skills with which they are spontaneously endowed, if they co-operate with the examiner. The only contribution of their prior study to passing the test is that poor prior study may make learning the new skills more difficult. Such pupils might find their course outline frustrating, even if they were glad that their efforts had some loose relation to their final success. Finally, this solution seems *ad hoc* and requires the multiplication of miracles beyond necessity, if more parsimonious accounts are available.

[9] E.g. *TI* 14, 286; *TI* 5, 128.
[10] Since, in Catholic theology, even the affection of the will for accepting sanctifying grace is itself a "prevenient" grace, if both prevenient and sanctifying grace were only offered together at the moment of such a supernatural vision, this preparation of character would be of even more marginal significance, perhaps merely affecting the level of the will's resistance to accepting sanctifying grace.
[11] i.e. at least *de re*, which is to say that certain attitudes/mental states of some non-theists may have God as their real object/referent, even if such attitudes are not consciously directed to Him. This is not to claim that all non-theists have spiritual lives (rich or otherwise) involving such attitudes/mental states.
[12] Note Paul's assertion that the moral awareness of gentiles can be characterised as recognition of divine law (Rom 2:14-15).

In what follows, I adopt something approaching Rahner's thesis that non even non-theists can possess the theological virtues, including "implicit" faith in Christ in the course of their ordinary experience of life.[13] Understanding how such "implicit" faith may exist in non-theists would be salutary for any Catholic theology of faith. There are particular points of difficulty, however, for such a thesis given CRE. Firstly, CRE is couched in propositional terms, meaning that I should explain how it is possible to believe a proposition to which one has no conscious disposition to assent. Further, I argued above that when believers exercise divine faith, they make trust in divine revelation a fundamental doxastic practice. Even if it is possible to understand how a non-theist might implicitly believe in divinely revealed propositions, it seems hard to understand how any such fundamental doxastic practice could underlie this belief. Finally, in developing CRE, I assumed that if a belief is formed graciously it will be held in a way which sometimes challenges our natural epistemic practices. Yet not everyone obviously holds *any* beliefs in such unusual ways; indeed efforts to avoid such "superstition" are an important part of "naturalism". If naturalists too are capable of salvation, I should explain how they can also hold beliefs supernaturally.

Given the plausibility of the theory of Anonymous Christianity for Catholic theology, it is desirable to show the compatibility of CRE with this theory. Moreover, I suggested above that divine faith is not grounded in evidence acceptable to sceptics. Since some Christians take themselves to believe on the basis of such evidence, an account of "anonymous" divine faith may also show how these believers possess supernatural rather than merely acquired faith.

1.2 Rahner's Mechanism for Anonymous Faith

Rahner sought to explain how implicit faith is possible, even for non-theists. I shall begin my exploration of the compatibility of Anonymous Christianity with CRE by examining Rahner's own explanation of the former.

[13] Since Trent Session VI Chapter 7 (Denzinger, 1529) teaches that all of the theological virtues are the formal causes of justification, non-theists must also have "implicit" hope in and love for Christ. Since my thesis is primarily about the infused virtue of faith, however, I focus on the latter below. However, as noted above (Ch1, 5.0) I will actually suggest that non-theists can possess a distant disposition to divine faith which is not presently actualised or easily forthcoming, so that "anonymous Christians" can only be said to possess divine faith in the loose sense that they have an intellectual disposition to acts of faith which is currently wholly latent.

To understand Rahner's mechanism for anonymous faith, however, it is necessary to be acquainted with aspects of his theological system concerning our knowledge of God, and the relationship between "grace" and "nature". I shall give a brief exposition of Rahner's thoughts, before outlining and analysing his model for implicit faith. For ease of comprehension, I summarise key elements of Rahner's thought in five propositions (AC 1-5), which can then be combined with my own account of "implicit belief" to elucidate Rahner's model of Anonymous Christianity.

1.2.1 Pre-apprehension of Being

Central to Rahner's thought is the attempt to discover a "transcendental"[14] awareness of the property "being", and ultimately God Himself (i.e. *Esse Subsistens*; Rahner prefers the term "Holy/Absolute Mystery")[15] lying behind our ordinary description of "categorical" objects.[16] Rahner dubs this "pre-thematic"[17] awareness the "pre-apprehension of being" ("*vorgriff auf esse*"). In affirming the existence of the *vorgriff*, Rahner is committed to the following claim:

AC1: Every predication of the form "x is y" is only intelligible if the concept of a necessarily existent, infinite being (God) is likewise intelligible. God is experienced pre-conceptually in every mental act which involves such predications.

Rahner's argument for the *vorgriff* is complicated, and bound up with his broader analysis of knowledge.[18] To aid the reader's understanding of AC1, I now outline what I take to be the broad thrust of Rahner's argument, while abstracting somewhat from context and using some of my own terminology. Rahner understands an object's existence (*esse*) as the ontological (i.e. extra-mental)[19]

[14] Rahner's use of the term combines the Scholastic understanding of "transcendental" properties, with a Kantian notion of the "transcendental" conditions of the possibility of experience- cf. Karen Kilby, *Karl Rahner, Theology and Philosophy* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2004), 32.
[15] Cf. Karl Rahner, *The Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), 60.
[16] i.e. the finite objects of everyday experience.
[17] i.e. pre-conceptual.
[18] For Rahner's argument, cf. Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World* (London: Sheed and Ward 1968) 117-236; *Hearers of the Word* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1969), 31-68.
[19] At times Rahner seems to want to assert that an object's being know is equivalent to its existence (cf. *Hearers*, 50 "being is knowing"), leaving him vulnerable to a charge of naïve idealism- cf. George Vass *A Theologian in Search of a Philosophy* (London: Sheed and Ward1985), 42. Elsewhere, he notes this problem, and defines existence as "knowability" (*Hearers*, 38). Although Rahner talks of the ability to be "known" here,

counterpart for its "intelligibility" or ability to be truly described (something like a truthmaker, perhaps).[20] Experience, Rahner argues, tells us that some objects admit of richer veridical descriptions than others-i.e. their veridical descriptions possess more content.[21] For example, conscious beings simply evince an ontological richness not found in inanimate objects, such that there is *more to say* about them, which cannot be reduced to the "number" of properties they might possess. Since *esse* is the metaphysical correlate of veridical predication, this means that some objects possess more *esse* than others. Nevertheless, all of the objects with which we are directly acquainted with have some limit to their existence.

To explicate my use of the terms "*esse*" and "limit" here, I will briefly summarise the work of Barry Miller, an analytic philosopher who defends a similar view.[22] Having argued that "existence" is a first-order predicate and metaphysical constituent of beings, Miller seeks to clarify the relationship between "existence" (*esse*) and other properties possessed by beings. Miller notes that it is difficult to claim that "existence" is a property like any other, since all the properties which a being possesses seem to depend on the "existence" of the object, and indeed to exist themselves.[23] Miller solves this problem by claiming that existence underlies and constitutes all other properties. Drawing an analogy between matter and form, Miller urges that the "existence" of an object corresponds to the "matter" which gives material objects their reality, but which requires "limitation" by its "bounds" (i.e. form) to individuate it by separating it from other material objects. In line with this analogy, the "properties" we ascribe to beings are really differing "limits" on the existence of an object.[24] This is most obvious with regard to objects which possess physical properties in finite amounts- thus; there is *less of* (or better- *less to*) smaller than larger objects. Readers may demand a definition of *esse* from Rahner

---

perhaps he just means "the ability to be truly predicated of", since the distinctive status of knowledge as against mere true belief seems irrelevant to his point.

[20] More precisely, in Idealist vein, Rahner defines being as "being present to self" in an act of knowledge (cf. *Spirit*, 68-71; *Hearers*, 38-44) despite recognising that inanimate objects strictly lack self-awareness or knowledge. I bracket this consideration for ease of exposition.

[21] Cf. *Hearers*, 46-8. Here, in Kantian vein, Rahner's starting point is the limited nature of a subject's knowledge of itself, (and thus, given Rahner's metaphysics, its being) which reveals that entities possess more/less being insofar as they are more/less self-aware.

[22] Barry Miller, *A Most Unlikely God: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature of God* (London and Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1996).

[23] Miller, *A Most Unlikely God*, 28-32.

[24] Cf. *Ibid.* 33-59.

beyond that of "the ability to be known" or Miller's analogy. Yet as William Vallicella has noted, if "existence" is a property, it will not admit of a definition which reduces it to any other, since other properties are things which exist or which inform existent entities.[25]

There is no upper limit on the amount of *esse* an entity can possess, meaning that the concept of boundless, infinite *esse* constitutes the limits of the human ability to offer increasingly "rich" descriptions of objects.[26] Rahner metaphorically describes this concept of unlimited description as an epistemological "horizon", because it constitutes the richest possible description of an object and thus provides a boundary on intelligibility, of which our limited descriptions fall short. Yet this horizon does not admit of ordinary description as a categorial object, because ordinary acts of description assert that an entity is limited in *esse.*[27] Rahner investigates what constitutes this "horizon", first considering the possibility that unlimited *esse* may be equivalent to *esse communis*: the sum of all *esse* possessed by limited entities. [28] However, Rahner argues that the notion of *esse* being unbounded suggests the possibility of a single entity possessing unlimited *esse*: God. Rahner asserts without explanation that the possibility of this entity entails its actuality- perhaps echoing Aquinas' "fourth way", or Anselm's argument in *Proslogion* II.[29] According to Rahner, therefore, an analysis of everyday statements of predication concerning "categorical" objects necessarily yields the concept of a necessary, unlimited being. Whilst noting that many fail to reflect on the preconditions of their everyday affirmations and thus to consciously affirm theism, Rahner holds that there is a sense in which every instance of categorical predication is an implicit acceptance of God's existence.

---

[25] William Vallicella, *A Paradigm Theory of Existence: Onto-Theology Vindicated* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002) 2-3; Cf. Rahner, *Spirit*, 71.

[26] In line with Miller's claim that *esse* is analogous to matter which can be more or less bounded and thus constitute different entities, this might be taken to imply that being is ascribed to God and creatures "univocally", and even exists of a single, degreed property *in re*. It is important to note that Rahner would likely rather wish to claim that *esse* is predicated of and exists in God/creatures in an analogous sense. Thus perhaps Miller's analogy between *esse* and matter breaks down at this point as an illustration of Rahner's position. For Rahner's insistence that God is only predicated analogously, cf. Rahner, "Experiences of a Catholic Theologian", *Theological Studies* 61 (2000). Yet for perhaps similar language in Rahner of essence "limiting" *esse*, cf. Patrick Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahne*r (New York: Fordham UP, 2002), 21.

[27] Cf. *Foundations*, 63.

[28] *Hearers*, 61-4.

[29] *Spirit* 181, "Hence [when Absolute Being is affirmed as possible, it] is simultaneously affirmed as real (since it cannot be grasped as merely possible)". Cf. *Hearers*, 63-4.

Rahner's argument for the *vorgriff* is controversial throughout. Since I lack space to discuss its cogency at length, I shall briefly note a few potential objections. Firstly, the consensus among analytic philosophers has been that "existence" is not a first-order property which can be predicated of entities; Rahner's argument assumes otherwise. Secondly, the final stage of Rahner's argument, which attempts to move from a demonstration of the meaningfulness of the concept of *esse subsistens* to its actuality, is also highly contestable. Most philosophers reject parallel moves made in "ontological arguments" for God's existence. Further, Karen Kilby argues that Rahner's argument for the *vorgriff* fails for the same reasons that analytic philosophers reject "transcendental" arguments purporting to demonstrate the necessary preconditions of human thought.[30] Kilby suggests that at best, such arguments only yield *possible* analyses of the structures of thought, leaving the possibility that there are other, equally legitimate analyses. In Rahner's case, this would leave the existence of the *vorgriff/*God merely a possible interpretation of the pre-conditions of human thought. One final issue is that if I have sketched Rahner's argument accurately, it is not obvious that its conclusion should be that we have any pre-conceptual *experience* of God. Rather, his argument seemingly purports to show only that one analysis of predication contains within it the conceptual material necessary to grasp the concept of God.

1.2.2 The Supernatural Existential

According to Rahner, the *vorgriff* explains natural human knowledge of God. However, the Church also teaches that human can gain supernatural knowledge of God which is inchoately present in the faith, and culminates in the "immediate", unmediated knowledge of God in the beatific vision.

Given God's universal salvific will, all humans are orientated towards beatific knowledge of God which surpasses our natural epistemic capacities. Yet this creates metaphysical difficulties for an Aristotelian understanding of nature. For Aristotelians, creatures possess their inherent teleology in virtue of their natures. But in the case of the beatific vision, it is claimed that the end of "engraced" humanity surpasses our natural powers, without humans changing substantially with the infusion of

[30] Karen Kilby, *Karl Rahner: Theology and Philosophy* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), 40-8.

grace. As George Vass notes, Aquinas apparently deals with this difficulty with two strategies.[31] On De Lubac's controversial reading, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Aquinas writes of a natural desire (*desiderium naturale*) for the beatific vision, which God cannot permit to remain frustrated.[32] This thought might lead to the unfortunate conclusion that humans are somehow *owed* grace (or, that God has bound Himself to bestow grace) in virtue of our natural constitution. Aquinas, therefore, also stresses[33] that humans have *two* ends (natural and supernatural) and elsewhere he demotes the *desiderium naturale* to the status of an "obediential potency", which Neo-Scholastics interpreted as a mere passive openness to grace. On this latter view, one might naturally *hope* to receive the beatific vision, but nevertheless be bound to remain content with one's natural end if this remained unfulfilled.[34]

This view, however, contains two difficulties. Firstly, as R.R. Reno notes[35], for Neo-Scholastics metaphysical categories for discussing the ontology of grace were derived from Aristotelian metaphysics. From this perspective the change which grace effects in humanity must be either substantial or accidental. The former seems implausible since it suggests a transformation so radical that there is no continuity of identity for the individual touched by grace. Yet equally, it seems hard to maintain that that the radical change in humanity's end and capabilities effected by grace is merely accidental. Facing this difficulty, mid-twentieth century proponents of the *nouvelle theologie*, including Henri De Lubac, argued that human nature is intrinsically orientated towards beatitude.[36] According to De Lubac, there is an existential difficulty with theory that nature possesses only an obediential potency for grace. Since grace does not, on this view, respond to any deep need for beatitude, grace seems an unnecessary addition to the life of the non-Christian; and the story of our

[31] George Vass, *The Mystery of Man and the Foundations of a Theological System* (London: Sheed & Ward,1985), 61.
[32] Cf. *SCG* IIIa.48. The interpretation of the *desiderium naturale* in such texts is heavily contested. For a detailed critique of De Lubac's reading of the *desiderium* as implying that human nature is intrinsically oriented to beatitude cf. Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas and his Interpreters* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010), who argues that the latter is merely a conditional desire which permits a natural openness to the potential offer of beatitude.
[33] E.g. ST Ia.2.1 *ad 1*; *SCG* III.48.
[34] C.f. Rahner, *Hearers*, 92.
[35] Russell R. Reno, *The Orindary Transformed: Karl Rahner and the Christian Vision of Transcendence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 93-4.
[36] Cf. e.g. Henri De Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969).

salvation to include a "plot twist" so unrelated to our past as to appear arbitrary. De Lubac argued that the Patristic tradition, Aquinas' neglected notion of the *desiderium naturale* and human experience all indicate that humans are shaped by a desire for beatitude. Moreover, he proposed that growing indifference to Christianity was due to the gospel's lack of relevance to secular experience, which the Neo-Scholastic division of grace and nature suggested. Still, the difficulty remained for De Lubac's view that even if creation can be described as "gracious", his position lacks room for God to graciously offer grace as a further, unmerited gift. Consequently, De Lubac's views were condemned in *Humani Generis* (1950).[37]

Rahner attempts to mediate between Neo-Scholastic "extrinisicism" and De Lubac's "intrinsicist" view of grace.[38] Whilst it is necessary to preserve the distinction between nature and grace to account for the gratuity of God's offer of beatitude, it is not necessary to affirm that this distinction has a temporal aspect, or that human nature ever existed in the actual world without the offer of grace.[39] Rather, in the actual world -though not in all possible worlds- all humans experience the offer of grace. Whilst remaining unmerited, grace is accordingly never foreign to our deepest desires, solving De Lubac's objection to "accidental" grace. In the actual world, nature is a "remainder-concept" (*restbegriff*), since it is only formally distinct from grace. Yet there are other possible worlds where humanity lacks a supernatural end, since it is not required by human nature.

Rahner characterises the offer of grace as a "supernatural existential", borrowing the latter term from Heidegger. An "existential" is some characteristic of a person which determines, before any personal decision, the shape and significance that her personal choices can take. Rahner gives examples of

[37] Denzinger, 3891.
[38] Cf. *TI* 4, 165-188.
[39] Rahner's reason for affirming the gratuity of God's offer of self-communication differs from some Neo-Scholastics, who insisted that it was possible to understand which human properties are natural/gracious simply by examining which of the "two ends" of man they were orientated towards. By contrast, Rahner suggests- at least, in his later works- that it is only gracious revelation itself which enables us to grasp the nature/grace distinction. Cf. Reno, *The Ordinary Transformed,* 110. For Rahner, there are no peculiar created "faculties" endowed by grace for us to observe in operation (cf. *TI* 21, 155-6). Rather, all human actions are given a gracious "modality" by being granted a supernatural formal object. In Rahner's view, it is the experience of grace as *divine love* (analogous to human love), that allows us to realise that although we might have a yearning for "communion" with another (God), the individual bestowing of love (grace) is essentially unique and cannot be expected or demanded.

other human "existentials" such as sinfulness and being threatened.[40] Rahner's contention is that humans are placed in a situation where our personal decisions are always made in response to the offer of grace, which at some level is experienced (see below). The salient point for Rahner's doctrine of Anonymous Christianity, however, is that in his view humanity is everywhere and always intended to attain beatitude, through a contingent offer of grace. This position can be summarised as follows:

AC2: In the actual world -but not all possible worlds- all humans are offered God's help to attain to the beatific vision, which we can freely accept or reject.

1.2.3 Divine Self-Offer

Humanity, then, is oriented towards the beatific vision. Rahner even calls humanity "the event of the absolute self-communication of God".[41] Yet how does Rahner parse this self-communication ontologically, whilst denying that particular human faculties are intrinsically supernatural? Rahner again attempts to expand the horizon of Neo-Scholastic metaphysics, by asserting the primacy of "uncreated" grace (i.e. the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) over "created" grace (i.e. the theological virtues, or else the participation in God which they cause). As Stephen Duffy writes, "grace, for Rahner, is first and foremost God in self-communication".[42] According to Scholastic theology, although it is somehow true that the Holy Spirit in-dwells the justified, this presence is effected by the infusion of the theological virtues which Trent dubbed the "sole formal cause" of justification.[43] This position was advanced to account for the change in relation to God on the part of the justified person. Since for Scholastics, God is immutable and lacks "real relations" to creatures, a change in God's relation to creatures must be effected by a change in the creature's properties.[44] Rahner, however,

[40] Conway, *The Anonymous Christian*, 14.
[41] *TI* 1, 298. I do not mean to wholeheartedly endorse Rahner's theological anthropology. The latter is somewhat problematic when developed into his "Christology from below". This tends to portray Jesus as merely the high-point of humanity's openness/response to God, and so fails to explain how the hypostatic union is a closer relation to God than the perfect human openness to God afforded to Mary and those in heaven. Cf. Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 139-155.
[42] Stephen Duffy, "The Experience of Grace" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 44.
[43] Trent Session VI, Chapter 7 (Denzinger 1529).
[44] On the medieval understanding, X is really related to Y just if X is related to Y on the basis of some intrinsic property of X.

argues that in Scripture and the Fathers, the order of causation is reversed: the theological virtues are immediately infused by the Spirit's presence.[45]

Seeking to characterise the Spirit's presence metaphysically, Rahner suggests that the Spirit is present in the believer by "quasi-formal" causality. The idea is that just as in the case of the beatific vision for Aquinas, the intellect of the one justified is somehow "informed" directly by God, without God being changed or composing a single entity with the justified.[46] The union between God and the soul which Aquinas posits in the beatified is mysterious, but Rahner suggests that Catholic theologians are already committed to a similar possibility in the Incarnation, where Christ's human nature depends on the Son's hypostasis for existence without Christ's human predicates characterising His divine nature. Rahner retains a role for created grace, by asserting that the theological virtues constitute the "material cause" of the union with God wrought by grace, making them the sole formal cause of justification intrinsic to the justified.

Whilst we presently lack the beatific vision, Rahner claims that humans already experience a germ of the immediate knowledge of God contained therein. This occurs through God's gracious transformation of the *vorgriff*, and thus universally belongs to our "pre-thematic" experience. Rahner describes this gracious pre-thematic knowledge as the perception that the "horizon" of being (God) is not merely the distant boundary of intelligibility, but rather a reality drawing close to us.[47] This "drawing close", experienced by all humans, is the free offer of God's self-communication. It is in the drawing close of the concept of infinite being experienced pre-thematically in the *vorgriff* that God's offer of grace to all (the "supernatural existential") consists. This yields the following Rahnerian thesis:

AC3: In the actual world, the pre-conceptual experience of infinite being drawing close underlies all mental acts involving predication of the form "x is y".

[45] *TI* 1, "Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace", 297-300.
[46] Cf. Aquinas (ST Suppl. 92.I Resp) on the beatific vision.
[47] *Foundations*, 116-33.

It is difficult to understand Rahner's notion of the pre-thematic experience of grace. Rahner neglects to explain how God, who if classically parsed as *Esse Infinitum* is immutable, can be veridically perceived as approaching a creature. Perhaps the idea is that although God is pre-thematically *perceived* as offering himself to us, at the ontological level this reflects our own tendency or desire (*desiderium naturale*) to approach God in the beatific vision.

However parsed, the offer of divine grace has important consequences regarding the knowledge and volitions of humans. For Rahner, all acts of knowledge and will depend on and respond to pre-thematic experience of God. Yet he also believes that all humans experience God as offering Himself to them. Rahner therefore asserts that in the actual world, all acts of human knowledge and will are "elevated" by grace, because they are carried out under conditions where God as "horizon" is always perceived as offering Himself to humans. Yet Rahner's conclusion here is suspect, particularly if the drawing near of God is characterised as a *desiderium*. Even if we always experience a "horizon" in our acts of categorical predication, to which we respond in our acts of knowledge and will; and even if this horizon is always experienced as "approaching", this need not mean that acts of knowledge and will are responses to the horizon *experienced as* approaching. Since for Rahner, the perceptions of God as Mystery (i.e. the infinite being all predications reach towards) and Holy (offering Himself) are conceptually distinct, it is difficult to maintain that all actions of knowledge and will are necessarily elevated by the offer of grace.

1.2.4 God's Grounding of Moral Values

Rahner holds that the existence of God is necessary for the grounding of all "absolute" moral duties.[48] Although when explaining the possibility of Anonymous Christianity he does argue for this claim, if I read Rahner correctly elsewhere, he reasons as follows.[49] If, in our everyday interactions with finite objects we err by inappropriately valuing/choosing some finite good over another, this error might be thought to be of finite significance, since it is just a failure to prioritise some end or object which is finitely more valuable than another. However, since all of our actions are a response to the pre-

[48] Cf. TI 9, 152. The absolute Being of God is "the reason that such an absolute moral demand can exist at all".
[49] Cf. *Foundations*, 99-100.

thematic experience of God's absolute being, in all our actions we implicitly affirm something about the nature of and our relation to God as the "horizon" of our value judgements. Consequently, a mistake which might seem "finite" in scope on the categorical level possesses the nature of an offence against the infinite being of God and the recognition He is owed. Moreover, insofar as God is always experienced as offering Himself, every morally significant choice is also an affirmation or denial of God's offer of intimacy. Rahner's analysis of the grounding of moral obligations can be encapsulated as follows:

AC4: Moral obligations are only absolutely binding because our conscious acts of belief and will dealing with finite creatures constitute a response to Absolute Being pre-conceptually perceived in the *vorgriff*.

Elsewhere, Rahner suggests another way in which grace gives greater moral weight to our actions: by elevating our loving actions towards neighbour, so that they become acts of the theological virtue, charity.[50] For Rahner, "charity" does not refer to every moral act,[51] but means complete self-disposal towards the other: giving up *everything* for neighbour.[52] This involves according one's neighbour absolute value. According to Rahner, to completely love one's neighbour is also (*de re*) to love God, though acts of charity need not be conceptualised by their subject as performed through love of God.[53] One might object that the depth of love for neighbour which Rahner recommends is idolatrous, since it accords the beloved the status of one with infinite value. Although Rahner maintains that charity is "empowered by God to attain its ultimate radicality, and a love which really terminates and rests in our neighbour",[54] he notes the concern that such love towards neighbour is inappropriate given their finitude and mutability. However, since God offers Himself to all humans, He potentially becomes their quasi-formal cause, making absolute love of neighbour possible. Because God is potentially

[50] Cf. Karl Rahner, *Love of Jesus and Love of Neighbour* (Slough: St. Paul Publications, 1983), 39-45.
[51] Rahner does argue that in some sense the whole moral life is aimed at love of neighbour. Cf. *TI* 6, "Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbour and the Love of God", 239-241. Rahner writes that love of neighbour is "the basis and sum total of the moral as such" (*Ibid.* 240).
[52] Gerald Beyer, "Karl Rahner on the Radical Unity of the Love of God and Neighbour", *Irish Theological Quarterly* 68 (2003); 271-2.
[53] "The unconditionality of human love can be experienced indeed and it is altogether a praiseworthy thing, but the Christian knows that it rests, at least "anonymously", on the unconditional [offer of grace in Christ]". Rahner, *Love of Jesus*, 44.
[54] *TI* 6, 244.

united to one's neighbour, one can love her absolutely as (or, insofar as she is) united to God, who is absolutely lovable. Rahner writes, "The only one who can be loved with an absolutely selfless and unconditional love…[is a beloved]… so associated with the unconditionality, purity, clarity and boundlessness of God that all these characteristics can in some sense be asserted of the beloved, if only by participation".[55] We can distil Rahner's thought here:

AC5: There exists a moral obligation to love one's neighbour without reserve. This obligation is necessarily grounded in God's universal offer of grace.

1.2.5 Anonymous Christianity Sketched

With propositions (AC1-5) in mind, it is possible to sketch Rahner's analysis of how atheists can have "implicit" faith in God and divine revelation. The moral actions of some atheists indicate that they believe in absolutely binding moral obligations, including an obligation of charity. According to Rahner, the existence of God and his offer of self-communication is a necessary precondition of such moral obligations (AC4/5). In believing in the existence of these moral values, Rahner claims that atheists "implicitly" believe in their necessary preconditions.[56] Thus, atheists have "implicit faith" in an article of Catholic faith- divine grace- which is an essentially supernatural object of belief. Further, we have seen that all acts of knowledge of the form "x is y" occur as a response to pre-conceptual awareness of God (AC1) which in the actual world is also the pre-conceptual awareness of God's self-offer (AC2-3). The atheist's "implicit" faith in God's grace as grounding the obligation to charity is thus based on the supernatural, pre-conceptual experience of grace. Accordingly, the "implicit" faith of the atheist has a supernatural object (*fides quae*), and is also made on the basis of pre-conceptual divine revelation, possessing a supernatural reason for assent (*fides qua*). Unfortunately, Rahner gives no analysis of what constitutes "implicit" belief. To clarify his model of Anonymous Christianity, I now outline my own understanding of implicit belief.

[55] Rahner, *Love of Jesus*, 42.
[56] *TI* 9, 153.

1.2.6 Implicit Belief

Whilst Rahner does not discuss the nature of "implicit" belief, as Joseph DiNoia notes,[57] the latter has theological origins in Scholastic speculation about how uneducated Christians and those who existed before Christ could share Catholic faith. As sketched above, the idea is that those with "implicit" faith possess a disposition to accept articles of faith which they do not currently believe, in virtue of their current intellectual habits. Thus an uneducated Christian who believes the principle articles of the creed and commits herself to believing the Church's teaching is disposed to accept finer points of doctrine. Likewise, a pre-Christian who believed that God would somehow effect human salvation possessed a disposition to believe in Jesus were He to present Himself as Christ. The traditional notion of implicit faith as found in Aquinas involves this disposition to believe being grounded in explicit belief. For uneducated Christians, their disposition is grounded in assent to basic articles of faith and their explicit commitment to believing Church teaching as they learn of it.

I now offer a developed description of "implicit" beliefs, and suggest two ways in which belief in God may be held "implicitly" in Rahner's model. As I understand them, implicit beliefs must be held on the basis of explicit beliefs. A belief *x* is held implicitly on the basis of belief (or, set of beliefs) *y* just if although *x* has never been an occurrent belief for the subject holding *y* creates a disposition to believe *x* in certain circumstances which do not include the proffering of evidence for *x*, given the present intellectual habits of the subject.[58] Since "implicit" beliefs consist of a disposition to believe, they differ from either occurrent (conscious) or "dispositional" beliefs (beliefs which a subject does not consciously hold, but which already form part of her noetic structure).[59] Talking of implicit beliefs, therefore, involves using the term "belief" loosely so as to refer to intellectual dispositions in addition to current items of a subject's noetic structure. There is, however, often reason to discuss

[57] Augustine DiNoia, "Implicit Faith, General Revelation and the State of Non-Christians." *The Thomist*, 47 No.2 (1983), 223.
[58] Perhaps one should also hold that the disposition should be able to be triggered simply by raising the question of the truth of *x*, although there may be other relevant circumstances (see below).
[59] For the distinction between dispositional beliefs and dispositions to believe relevant to implicit faith, cf. Robert Audi, "Dispositional Beliefs and Dispositions to Believe", *Nous*, 28 (4) (1995). Since dispositional beliefs often become occurrent under similar circumstances to those needed to elicit implicit beliefs, the two are easily confused. However, when one has a dispositional belief, one is already intrinsically disposed to affirm the belief if one considers its truth. By contrast, when an "implicit" belief becomes occurrent, one infers the truth of the relevant proposition- perhaps, quickly and subconsciously- from one's current beliefs.

intellectual dispositions. Notably, dispositions to believe which are based on properly held current intellectual commitments often place a believer "on the right track" to forming true beliefs in future. Since the formation of beliefs within communities is frequently a developing, collaborative process, intellectual historians sometimes talk of the conclusions of one generation being "implicit" in the thought of their forebears; such conclusions being merely the application of the previous generations' insights to contemporary questions. One's implicit beliefs are, therefore, relevant to an assessment of whether one is in a favourable (epistemically, "virtuous") position to reliably form true beliefs.

Given our prior beliefs and intellectual habits, there are propositions which we are likely to affirm if quizzed as to their veracity, even if we lack dispositional belief in them or fresh evidence in their favour. For example, if most people are told that Socrates is a man, they will assent to the proposition "Socrates is an animal" on prompting. For most people who are aware of Socrates' existence yet who have not considered the question of his animal nature, the belief that "Socrates is an animal" is implicit. Whilst this is a paradigm case of implicit belief, many implicit beliefs might take more reflection to be elicited, if their relation to a believer's current epistemic position is more opaque.

Some dispositions to believe typically considered instances of implicit belief would not merely be triggered by the subject considering their truth. This is because some beliefs might only be formed by a subject when considering the truth of the relevant proposition if she were given additional information to clarify the relationship between the proposition under question and her current beliefs. For example, the West's eventual abolition of slavery was plausibly the development of a disposition latent in Early Christian thought. However, to affirm such a claim would not be to suspect that the Fathers would have rejected the institution of slavery upon mere consideration of the question. Rather, the Fathers may only have been disposed to reach such a conclusion were they to reflect at length on the implications of their theological anthropologies in the light of new information available to later generations, for example concerning the possibility of economic structures without slavery. To talk more broadly of a subject possessing implicit belief, therefore, is to maintain that due to a subject's prior intellectual commitments, the "implicit" belief *will naturally be forthcoming in circumstances relevant to its consideration*.

Talk of implicit beliefs in this sense might seem suspect. Presumably, subjects have the disposition to form a vast range of beliefs on the basis of their current intellectual commitments if given certain information, and not all such inclinations can fruitfully be termed implicit beliefs. In response, note firstly that the circumstances relevant to the consideration of a subject's holding "implicit" beliefs of this sort are normally taken to be epistemically "generous", since the new information which is counterfactually supposed to be offered to the subject is stipulated to be *true*.[60] This is because it is hardly relevant to the epistemic virtue of a subject that she might gain false beliefs by being given false information in possible "sceptical" scenarios. Secondly, note that it more plausible to talk of implicit belief when the receipt of the additional information does not make a large change to the noetic structure of the person informed. New information can make a large change to someone's noetic structure in at least four ways. Firstly, the more information supplied, the larger the change. Secondly, the less similar the information is to the subject's current beliefs, the larger the change. For example, if someone knows nothing about sparrows is informed that they are brown, this is a more significant change to their noetic structure than for someone who already knows something about sparrows. Thirdly, the more difficult it would be for the person to learn of the new information, the "larger" or at least more significant the change. Finally, the subject may explicitly believe that the new information is false, or have beliefs which suggest its falsity. In this case, since it is presumed that the subject *comes to believe* the information offered, imparting such information will yield a larger "noetic change". Where the subject would need less noetic change of these sorts to trigger the relevant belief, it is more plausible to say that she holds the belief "implicitly".

Like explicit beliefs, (those which have been or are sometimes occurrent for a subject), implicit beliefs can be *de dicto* or merely *de re*.[61] Given this, it is possible to see how Rahner might understand the believer in "absolute" morality to have *de re* belief in God. Almost all believers in a proposition have an intellectual disposition, if prompted, to affirm that "the necessary preconditions for said proposition obtain". Since in fact, the "necessary preconditions" for absolutely binding moral

[60] Thus few Catholics would maintain that the Fathers implicitly supported American slavery because they could have been falsely led to believe that black people are sub-human.
[61] Or presumably, both, but the combination is not of interest to me here.

obligations include God's self-gift on Rahner's account, those accepting the existence of said moral obligations will likely have *de re* belief in God.

Might an implicit believer also have *de dicto* implicit belief in God? Perhaps, if atheists committed to the existence of absolute moral obligations were to learn that God's existence and grace necessarily underpinned these obligations, they would be disposed to believe in God. Accordingly, many atheists have *some* intellectual disposition to believe in God. However, coming to believe that God necessarily grounds moral values may constitute a large change in an atheist's noetic structure as outlined above. For many atheists, the thought that God underpins moral obligation might be entirely foreign to them. This belief may be difficult for many atheists to acquire; particularly for those inculpably ignorant of God's existence because they lack the concept of God or sincerely find God's existence unlikely. Consequently, the current beliefs of atheists may suggest that the probability of God grounding moral values is very low. In short, for many atheists, the disposition to believe *de dicto* in God's existence on the basis that He grounds moral values will be distant, because it would represent a large change to their noetic structure in the second, third and fourth ways outlined above. To talk of such atheists having implicit *de dicto* belief in God does not seem very plausible. It at best suggests an intellectual disposition to belief in God on their part which will not be easily realised, meaning that they lack much "intellectual virtue" when forming religious beliefs.

There is another consideration, however, which might militate against atheists being ascribed *de re* or *de dicto* belief in God or His self-gift. Whilst many people have a disposition to affirm the necessary pre-conditions of states of affairs which they currently believe to obtain, such a disposition may not be present if the pre-conditions in question themselves constitute a state of affairs which the subject finds highly improbable. Were the subject to suspect that the pre-conditions of the truth of a current belief were of this nature, she might abandon her prior belief more readily than conclude that the antecedently improbable conditions obtain. Equally, whilst a believer might readily affirm that "the necessary pre-conditions of *x*" obtain since she believes in *x*, such an affirmation might really amount to belief in "the necessary conditions of *x*; providing they are not too improbable". Such a believer would not, therefore, have *de re* belief in the actual pre-conditions of *x* in virtue of *de dicto* belief in

"the necessary pre-conditions of *x*" if the former were actually a state of affairs which she would find highly unlikely. Applied to anonymous Christianity, it follows that atheists who have a very low credence in God's existence might lack *de dicto* or *de re* implicit belief in God and grace, even if they affirm an absolute obligation to charity. Rahner, however, sometimes writes of anonymous Christians as absolutely committed to affirming moral obligations in thought and deed.[62] Accordingly, perhaps he would be happy to admit that only those sufficiently committed to the existence of moral obligations so as to be disposed to believe in God on the basis of their existence (on discovering the theological preconditions of morality) possess anonymous faith.

I now illustrate some additional virtues of Rahner's theory that the acceptance of moral duties constitutes an "implicit" acceptance of divine grace. Firstly, Rahner affirms the "Thomist" position that the act of faith must have a supernatural formal object.[63] On Rahner's account, both the *fides quae* (object of belief) and the *fides qua* (reason for belief) of anonymous Christian belief are supernatural, because God's gracious self-offer is both the necessary precondition of moral obligations and also our knowledge that such obligations exist.[64] Further, Rahner attempts to give an account of the relationship of supernatural belief in a gracious God to faith in Christ and a desire to enter the Church. On the Neo-Scholastic theory, "anonymous" faith could only be either "*de re*" in the sense that the anonymous believer believes in the truth of "everything that God has revealed" (which in fact includes revelation through Christ), or else "virtual", in the sense that she is *disposed* to accept whatever God chooses to reveal when she becomes aware of it.

In Rahner's view, however, grace has an intimate connection to Christ.[65] On the Neo-Scholastic view, all grace is *from* Christ insofar as He merits it for us, and it confers participation in His sacrifice. However, most Scholastics accept that these facts are contingent since God could have bestowed sanctifying grace otherwise than through the Incarnation. Yet as Kilby notes in Rahner's view, Christ

[62] E.g. *TI* 16, 58: "the acceptance of transcendence in faith…can be found in faith in an atheist… given that he is absolutely obedient to the dictates of conscience and so accepts himself and God. Cf. *Ibid*., 67.
[63] E.g. *TI* 12, 170.
[64] Cf. *Foundations*, 118, "the acceptance of God's self-communication must be based upon and is based upon God's offer itself…this follows from the ultimate relationship between human transcendence as knowledge and freedom and the term and source by which this transcendence is opened up and upon which it is based."
[65] cf. *Foundations*, 153-170.

is not the meritorious, but the *final* cause of grace, and constitutes the definitive, historical acceptance and vindication of God's self-offer to humanity. [66] It should be remembered that for Rahner, grace aims at the elevation of humans *in their entirety*. Although grace may be accepted on a "pre-thematic" level, since human experience principally exists on the "objectified" level of categorical experience, it aims at a transformation of our categorical commitments and beliefs. Whilst anonymous faith is possible, therefore, the "transcendental" acceptance of grace is intended by God to become "objectified" as explicit, propositional Catholic belief.[67] If one culpably resists the evidence in favour of propositional faith one might be guilty of rejecting grace and its inner dynamism, meaning that Rahner does not hold that the possibility of Anonymous Christianity excludes the possibility of culpable atheism on the "categorical" level.[68]

Moreover, for Rahner sin and redemption have a corporate aspect. Grace not only aims at the transformation of the individual "anonymous" believer, but of the human community. In Rahner's view, Christ is the high-point and ultimate achievement of divine self-communication as accepted by humanity. He maintains that "In Jesus...grace, and…its categorical self-interpretation in the corporeal, tangible and social dimension have reached their climax, have become revelation in an absolute sense".[69] After Christ's death, the temporal and conscious manifestation of grace is necessarily continued in the Church, which is guided in its witness by the Spirit.[70] On Rahner's account, then, when someone implicitly believes in divine self-communication, she also accepts as its necessary consequence the Incarnation and the Church.[71]

---

[66] Kilby, *Karl Rahner*, 27.
[67] *TI* 12, 176 "The grace of God…has an incarnational character. It wills to extend itself into all human dimensions of life…to take effect in the historical and social dimensions…as well. This grace is intended of its very nature to be constitutive of the Church".
[68] E.g. *TI* 9, 156.
[69] *Foundations*, 175.
[70] "If… [the] history of God's transcendental self-communication to man is a history which can be experienced in time and space, then it follows from this perspective too that in the Christian understanding religion is necessarily ecclesial religion"- *Foundations*, 323. For Rahner on the Spirit's guidance of the Church, cf. *Foundations*, 379-382.
[71] Is this acceptance just the acceptance of *some* Incarnation and Church, or that the Incarnation in Jesus and the See of Peter specifically? Rahner seems to hold that *creation itself* has Christ (i.e. Jesus?) in mind, in which case at least the token communication of grace to humans entails that Jesus is God Incarnate. Cf. Vass, *The Mystery of Man*, 97-8.

1.3 Contemporary Criticism of Rahner's Anonymous Christianity

Having illustrated Rahner's attempt to explain Anonymous Christianity, I now evaluate his efforts. I start by examining criticisms levelled at Rahner's theology of faith by modern theologians, and then outline my own concerns in the following section.[72]

As Conway recounts, Rahner's views received criticism from his contemporaries, particularly Hans Urs von Balthasar. [73] This is somewhat surprising, since von Balthasar (hereafter, Balthasar) and many contemporaries accepted that non-Christians could be saved by grace.[74] Often, therefore, commentary on Anonymous Christianity contained a response to Rahner's entire theological method. In general, the difficulties raised against Anonymous Christianity amounted to the charge that in focussing on the *universal* prospect of salvation and relevance of the gospel, Rahner neglected the *particular* salvific value of a consciously Christian life, and of Christ's sacrifice. In my view, whilst these criticisms have value, they do not require the rejection of Rahner's account.

Henri de Lubac objected to the term "Anonymous Christianity", although not to the concept of the "anonymous Christian" itself. One of De Lubac's thoughts is that whilst, *pace* Rahner, interactions with others may be elevated by grace in a secular context (and even through interactions with pagan religions which contain elements of truth), "Christianity" is essentially an explicit, historical and social reality; indeed, the only such reality properly apt for the disposal and reception of grace. Hence he notes the importance of keeping apart "the problem of truth and the efficacy for salvation of a given religious doctrine" from "the problem of salvation made universally possible through divine grace".[75] Rahner could concede De Lubac's point,[76] writing that non-Christian religious systems are

[72] For an overview of criticisms of Rahner, cf. Gavin D'Costa, "Karl Rahner's Anonymous Christian: A Reappraisal", *Modern Theology* 1 (2), (1985), 131-148.
[73] Conway, *The Anonymous Christian, passim*.
[74] *Ibid.*, 142-3.
[75] De Lubac, *Mystery of the Supernatural*, 7.
[76] Indeed, he may have pre-empted De Lubac- cf. *TI* 5,117 "Christianity understands itself as the absolute religion, intended for all men, which cannot recognize any other religion beside itself as of equal right".

all in some way "sinful" distortions of divine reality, yet noting that anonymous Christianity is still possible if it simply refers to the set of anonymous Christians and their lives.[77]

Balthasar makes several connected criticisms of Rahner. Firstly, he criticises Rahner's position that Christ's death is only the *final* cause of salvation, alleging that this strips the cross of its proper value as the moment that Christ "bears our sins" in "sacrificial"[78] death.[79] I agree that Rahner should affirm an "objective" account of the atonement which merits our redemption.[80] However, it is questionable whether Rahner's account of the atonement is central to his explanation of Anonymous Christianity. Rahner could allow that Christ is both the meritorious and also the final cause of grace without damage to his wider theory.

Secondly, as Pasquini notes, Balthasar questions whether Rahner's theory of Anonymous Christianity makes explicit Christian practice irrelevant, and renders otiose Jesus' commandment to "make disciples of all nations". [81] In his polemic *The Moment of Christian Witness* (German, *Cordula*), Balthasar argues that since Christ promised that martyrdom in witness to Himself was to be the expected fate of Christians, the confession of Christ's name can hardly be a matter of indifference. Rahner considers this issue in *Theological Investigations* XII.[82] He notes that since on his view grace has an inbuilt dynamism towards conscious expression, humans have a duty to accept and embody the gospel when grace is offered explicitly, and to proclaim it to others. Thus, Medieval Scholastics held that the grace "conferred" in sacraments can be received prior to their reception (e.g. in the *votum baptismi*) whilst maintaining that nevertheless sacraments are indispensable fountains of grace, insofar as grace conferred before their reception is grounded in one's disposition to receive them.[83]

---

[77] *Foundations*, 173.
[78] Cf. 1 Peter 2:24; Romans 3:25; Matthew 26:26-28.
[79] Cf. Aidan Nichols, "Rahner and Balthasar: The Anonymous Christianity Debate Revisited", in *Beyond the Blue Glass*, Catholic Essays on Faith and Culture (London: The Saint Austin Press, 2002), 109.
[80] Cf. *CCC* 613-8/pp.140-1. This is not to endorse Balthasar's doctrine of atonement- for criticism, cf. Conway, *The Anonymous Christian*, 127-131.
[81] Pasquini, *Atheism and Salvation*, 55.
[82] *TI* 12, "Anonymous Christianity and the Missionary Task of the Church", 161-178.
[83] Aquinas, for example, suggests that adults generally receive the forgiveness of sins through grace when they possess the *votum baptismi* prior to baptism, as attested in the case of Cornelius (Acts 10). In STIIIa69.1ad2, he writes: "when an adult approaches baptism, he does indeed receive the forgiveness of all his sins through his purpose of being baptised, but more perfectly through the actual reception of baptism" (cf. STIIIa69.4ad2; *SSS*IVd3q1a1qc4ad1). For further references, cf. *TI* 12, 166-7.

Moreover, just as in Scholastic theory, additional grace is normally received with the sacrament, so Rahner suggests that conscious acceptance of Christianity is itself a moment of grace, which provides additional resources for the believer to deepen her relationship with God.[84] Rahner argues that his theology actually has positive implications for Christian mission. On his account, everyone who hears the gospel has already encountered grace on a pre-conceptual level. This means that "missionaries" can speak to an audience already fitted to accept the gospel, and that they should invite their audience to understand (via "mystagogy") the ways in which they have already experienced grace. Without his theory of the "supernatural existential", Rahner claims that the preaching of the gospel could have little existential relevance for potential converts, who would need to experience miraculous insight into the relevance of the gospel to their previous life experiences.[85]

This latter claim exposes the heart of the theological differences between Balthasar and Rahner. Both authors offer similar diagnoses of modern unbelief, highlighting the loss of traditional metaphysical and religious concerns which make Christianity "relevant".[86] However, they offer radically different solutions to the problem. Rahner believes it important to show a non-Christian that Christianity is already present in the depths of her moral and spiritual life. For Balthasar, the mundane and sinful concerns of everyday life are precisely what humans need rescuing from. In an excoriating section of *Cordula*, Balthasar imagines a conversation between a naïve "Rahnerian" Christian and a Commissar on the contemporary purpose of Christianity.[87] Since the former concedes that the Commissar may be an "anonymous Christian" by exercising charity, he struggles to explain the distinctive aims of Christianity as against Marxist pursuit of the "Absolute Future". Similarly, one should note the general criticism which Balthasar levels against "anthropological" methods of theology in *Love Alone is Credible*.[88] Balthasar worries that by claiming that the gospel is a categorical working out of the pre-conceptual experience of grace, Rahner narrows the horizons of revelation in Christ, and

[84] Cf. *Ibid*. 177.
[85] Rahner's case is unpersuasive. On a Neo-Scholastic account, the contents of revelation will be intelligible without "mystagogy", since the pre-ambles of faith can be known by "natural reason", which can further clarify revealed propositions and show their credibility. From an existential perspective, Neo-Scholastic missionaries might show that the gospel offers solutions to existential problems pagan philosophies leave unsolved e.g. the guilt of sin.
[86] Compare *TI* 6, 232-3 and *Glory* I, 18-19.
[87] Balthasar, *The Moment of Christian Witness* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 127-130.
[88] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 31-50.

diminishes its ability to astonish and judge our imaginations. De Lubac, writing in more moderate vein against "naïve" proponents of Anonymous Christianity also denounces the idea that "the revelation we came to in Christ was no more than the surfacing of something which already existed" as incompatible with the historical transformation of classical thought evident in the Fathers.[89] One might develop this criticism by observing that on Rahner's account, even otherwise "natural" cognitive or moral actions are elevated by grace so that their performance constitutes a supernatural assent to grace. Accordingly, acts sufficient for salvation need not be experienced as particularly morally challenging, contrary to my suggestion above that the exercise of supernatural faculties or habits is typically morally challenging. The possibility of quite minimal moral efforts (e.g. ordinary love of friends typical of "even gentiles and tax-collectors")[90] sufficing to unite a person with Christ's sacrifice is a far cry from Balthasar's claim that "Christian belief means the unconditional resolve to surrender one's life for Christ's sake".[91]

Against such concerns, Rahner can suggest that on a conscious level, non-believers might well find the claims of the gospel challenging, since their belief systems will be sinfully defective in conceptualising the pre-thematic experience of grace. Rahner emphasises that only those inculpably ignorant of the gospel can fail to consciously assent to Christian revelation whilst possessing implicit faith.[92] Explicit rejection of the gospel due to its intellectual and moral challenge remains a possibility for Rahner. Moreover, although Rahner's suggestion that *all* moral acts are potential salvific is problematic, when discussing the belief and action necessary for implicit salvation he stresses the radical nature of love which charity demands. By whatever means a non-Christian accounts for moral demands on a metaphysical level, engaging in acts of charity is spiritually arduous and conflicts with certain natural instincts. In all, while Balthasar may be correct in advocating the pastoral importance of emphasising the unique challenges and promises of Christian life, Rahner's account of Anonymous Christianity need not remove the scandalous nature of the gospel at a conceptual level.

[89] De Lubac, *Mystery of the Supernatural*, 87.
[90] Cf. Matthew 5:46.
[91] Balthasar, *Moment of Christian Witness*, 27.
[92] *TI* 5, 120.

Finally, I shall mention one recent criticism of Rahner which is perhaps clarified by my account of "implicit belief" as a disposition to believe under relevant circumstances. Joseph DiNoia, followed by Gavin D'Costa and Stephen Bullivant, have all suggested that the "implicit" faith of Rahner's anonymous Christians is too far divorced from explicit belief to give the anonymous Christian saving faith. DiNoia notes that for Aquinas, implicit faith was always connected to conscious affirmation of God's saving action and a commitment to believe and act upon divine revelation.[93] Rahner's ascription of implicit faith to atheists stretches the notion of implicit faith, by removing the requirement that those with implicit faith have conscious belief in God and a commitment to believe revelation. D'Costa, meanwhile, argues that the traditional principle of *fides ex auditu* requires that a believer be presented with an opportunity to explicitly believe in Christ.[94] In this respect, one might note that if implicit belief is merely a disposition to believe, then it would appear that implicit faith is merely a disposition to faith, rather than a species of faith itself. As D'Costa writes, "when pushed, Rahner could not hold that the anonymous Christian…is "saved" in the proper eschatological sense, but [that she] is on the road to salvation". [95] Consequently, all of the above authors suggest that non-Christians are presented with a revelation after death which allows them to form explicit faith in Christ.[96]

The suggestion that a disposition to believe does not itself suffice for salvation, but must be realised by response to post-mortem revelation, is plausible. However, as Bullivant notes, there is a difficulty for this suggestion, insofar as post-Augustinian theological consensus maintains that the opportunity for conversion ends with death. [97] Any suggestion to the contrary might (depending on the details) risk suggesting that the previous spiritual life of the believer was existentially absurd, since it was irrelevant to her eventual reception of grace, per Rahner's criticism of salvation by pre-mortem visions. D'Costa and Bullivant respond to this difficulty by suggesting that a non-Christian's post-

[93] Cf. DiNoia, "Implicit Faith", 222-8; Gavin D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 22; Bullivant, *The Salvation of Atheists,* 101-105.
[94] D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions*, 24-5.
[95] D'Costa, *Christainity and the World Religions*, 23.
[96] Cf. DiNoia, "Implicit faith", 235-7; D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions* 161-211; Bulllivant, *The Salvation of Atheists*, 115-179.
[97] Bullivant, *The Salvation of Atheists,* 129.

mortem decision to believe is based upon her previous responses to grace active in her non-Christian spiritual life.[98] Yet neither theologian offers a detailed account of how non-believers already possess a disposition to believe were they to be offered such post-mortem revelation.[99] Rahner's theory of Anonymous Christianity, as I have glossed it, could play an important role in such accounts of post-mortem salvation. It explains how given their current intellectual commitments, non-Christians are disposed to elicit explicit faith under such circumstances. Even if it is granted that implicit belief is not sufficient for salvation, Rahner's account of Anonymous Christianity might therefore figure in an account of salvation by post-mortem faith.

1.4 An Evaluation of Rahner's Mechanism

I now suggest further, more detrimental criticisms which may be levelled at Rahner's mechanism for Anonymous Christianity. First, however, I note some positive aspects of his theory. Unlike some of his Neo-scholastic predecessors, Rahner is able to account for the salvation of non-Christians in a manner which gives importance to their conscious spiritual lives. Since, in Rahner's view, every act of knowledge and will is potentially elevated by grace, there is no need to posit *ad hoc* miraculous revelations for non-Christians which would have only a loose relation to their prior spiritual experiences. At the same time, however, Rahner avoids the pitfalls of ascribing to non-Christians a "natural" salvation through actions unelevated by grace. Finally, Rahner is able to give some account of how the disposition of "implicit faith" in revelation is essentially related to belief in Christ.

It is remarkable how few of Rahner's critics attack his philosophical framework. *Pace* Kilby's contention that Rahner's theology does not rest in a "foundationalist" manner on his philosophy,[100] his account of Anonymous Christianity certainly relies upon his metaphysical conception of grace, which presupposes major philosophical commitments. Rahner's religious epistemology and resultant account of grace are certainly highly controversial, as indicated above. At least four claims made by

[98] D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions*,173; Bullivant, *The Salvation of Atheists*, 171-4.
[99] Bullivant (*The Salvation of Atheists*, 149-79) makes the creative suggestion that, following Matthew 25:31-46, non-believers already encounter Christ, in quasi-sacramental fashion, in their dealings with the poor and vulnerable. He does not, however, fully explain how the loving treatment of the poor gives rise to a cognitive disposition to faith in Christ post-mortem.
[100] Kilby, *Karl Rahner*, 127-8.

Rahner are highly dubious, which may undermine the plausibility of his account. Firstly, there is the claim that "esse" is a property of beings, which can be possessed to varying degrees by way of participation in infinite, Absolute Being. These claims are standard in Thomistic philosophy, and have contemporary defenders, but are generally rejected in analytic philosophy. Secondly, there is the contention, controversial even amongst Thomists, that God is affirmed as the pre-condition of and somehow pre-thematically "experienced" in every act of categorical predication. Third is the perplexing claim that in the actual world, humans are always offered the possibility of God becoming their "quasi-formal" cause even before the beatific vision. And finally, granted the third claim, there is the notion that this offer is experienced pre-conceptually, and that all predications and volitions are made through an experience of Mystery *as Mystery which draws close to man*. This latter claim does not seem evident even granting the other three. If it is incorrect, Rahner's desire to claim that all human acts of knowledge and will are elevated by grace is severely undermined, leaving him without a means of showing how "implicit" faith in Christ is a supernatural disposition.

I shall not attempt a complete evaluation of the difficulties just outlined above. This would require laborious metaphysical analysis unrelated to the central purpose of my thesis, which is the construction and defence of a particular religious epistemology. However, I simply note that in attempting to show the compatibility of CRE with the possibility of Anonymous Christianity, a model of implicit faith which has fewer controversial philosophical commitments is preferable.

There is a further theological difficulty for Rahner's account, in the assertion that the transformation wrought by grace can be entirely pre-conceptual. This assertion is problematic for two reasons which Rahner should accept. Firstly, by Rahner's own logic, grace which is present in the supernatural existential has a necessary dynamism towards explicit expression. Yet Rahner seems content to allow that individuals and cultures can possess salvific grace without any conscious transformation. In such circumstances, it seems false to say that the *whole person* of the anonymous Christian has been transformed by grace. Consequently, anonymous Christianity seems open to the charge which Rahner levels at the theory of pre-mortem vision, viz. that the eventual, conscious revelation of the beatific vision will seem only loosely related to the conscious content of the spiritual life of the anonymous

Christian. Indeed, Rahner himself criticises the post-Tridentine "Jesuit" view on which grace is not a conscious presence in the believer and so existentially irrelevant to her.[101] Secondly, given Rahner's supposition that "natural" actions can simply be elevated by their relation to "uncreated" grace offered in the supernatural existential, it seems that he is in danger of denying any role to created grace in the process of justification, contrary to both the teaching of Trent and his view that created grace provides the "matter" for the "quasi-formal" presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

The element in Rahner's theory which generates these theological problems is the notion that the *vorgriff* itself is graced. This notion leads to the thought that since every human action is a response to God's self-offer, no particular conscious belief or action is needed to mediate grace. As indicated above, it is difficult to understand the notion of an "approaching horizon", and still harder to see how the "pre-apprehension" of such a horizon necessitates that acts of knowledge and will which take place as a response to this pre-apprehension are responses to the horizon pre-apprehended *as approaching*. It should be noted, moreover, that Rahner's reasons for positing the graced *vorgriff* are less than compelling. In *Foundations*, the only argument given is that granted Rahner's endorsement of the supernatural existential, *all* acts of knowledge and will must be elevated by grace. I accept Rahner's position above that grace is universally available, and that all human lives constitute a response to its offer. However, I reject Rahner's conclusion that there can be no particular human habits or faculties which mediate our response to grace. I shall attempt to improve on Rahner's account by examining Balthasar's analysis of faith, which alleges that in the human experience of beauty, there is likewise an experience of God.

2.0 Balthasar's Fundamental Theology

As Kilby notes, Balthasar's theology is difficult to understand, due to the length of his writings, and his opaque style, which references myriad theological and cultural sources. [102] In what follows, therefore, I merely outline Balthasar's fundamental theology, drawing mainly on his exposition in the

[101] Cf. *TI* 3, 86-90.
[102] Karen Kilby, *Balthasar: A Very Critical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 6-7.

first volume of *Glory of the Lord* and *Love Alone is Credible*.[103] To this end, I firstly explain Balthasar's notion of secular beauty, the perception of which is supposed to be an analogue for faith. I then detail Balthasar's "theological" notion of the beauty of Christ, and explain how his view of faith as a perception and acceptance of this beauty is supposed to overcome problems with the analyses of faith given by Neo-Scholasticism and the *Nouvelle-Theologie*. Finally, I shall draw a comparison between Balthasar's model of the assent of faith and CRE.

This section may seem somewhat divorced from my attempt to explain how non-Christians can have "implicit" divine faith. However, the purpose of exploring Balthasar's analysis of faith is twofold. Firstly, a consideration of the role which the apprehension of beauty can play in grounding faith will pave the way for my own attempt to show the possibility of reconciling CRE with the possibility of Anonymous Christianity. Moreover, I hope to show that Balthasar's analysis of faith bears some resemblance to CRE, which will provide support for the thesis advanced in later chapters that CRE is grounded in Catholic tradition.

2.1 Balthasar on Beauty

Balthasar's analysis of faith draws upon an analogy between the act of faith and the perception of beauty. As Edward Oakes observes, Balthasar often focuses on *visual* acts of aesthetic perception, although he recognises that the analogy between the act of faith and aesthetic perception holds however the latter is specified in terms of sensory input.[104] Balthasar is a realist about beauty. Specifically, although Balthasar is often critical of Neo-Thomism as imaginatively sterile, Balthasar adopts Aquinas' understanding of beauty as a "transcendental" convertible with "truth", "goodness" and "unity".[105] As Eleonore Stump explains,[106] in Aquinas' view beauty differs only conceptually from goodness, which is a "mode" of being.[107] Precisely, for a thing to have goodness is just for it to

[103] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Volume I: Seeing the Form* (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1982). Hereafter, *Glory* I.
[104] Edward Oakes, *Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans-Urs von Balthasar* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 142.
[105] The importance of the first three transcendentals to Balthasar is obvious from the division of his *magnum opus* into "Glory of the Lord", "Theo-drama" and "Theo-logic".
[106] Eleonore Stump, "Beauty as a Road to God", *Sacred Music* 143 (4) (2007), 24.
[107] Cf. STIa.5.1

be desirable. However, Aquinas argues that things are only desirable insofar as they are "perfect"- i.e. in complete possession of the being they ought to have (God is supremely desirable as *Esse Subsistens*). A thing's "being" and its "goodness" therefore, are identical in extension. Beauty, moreover, is "being" not under its aspect as desirable to the appetite, but rather as appealing to the intellect as something pleasing to contemplate.[108] When Balthasar claims that we can perceive beauty in things, therefore, he means that we can grasp something fundamental about their metaphysical constitution, due to their appearance which uniquely fascinates us.

To further comprehend Balthasar's view of beauty, it may help to recall the analysis of existence given by Barry Miller, summarised above. According to Miller, "existence" is not a property which an entity possesses alongside others as another trope or property instance. Rather, "existence" underlies and constitutes all the properties which an entity possesses, rather as "matter" underlies and gives reality to the "form" of a material object, which is in a sense just the bounds which individuate a piece of matter. "Existence" and "essence" are distinct on this view, though neither can exist without the other. In his analysis of beauty, Balthasar makes s similar distinction between an object's "form" (*gestalt*) and its "content" or "depth" (sometimes described as splendour/*glanz*).[109] On one level, an object's beauty resides in its particular form (cf. the Latin "*formosus"*),[110] which often what attracts us to a beautiful object.

One might think that the beauty of a work of art consists entirely of its form. Yet it seems that in our acts of aesthetic perception the perceived object reveals more to us than its "shape", "texture", or any sensations which it evokes. Rather, we perceive not merely properties of the object and their internal relations, but also a "depth" of content: a reality which the being with these properties discloses. Balthasar neither tries to convince his reader that such "depth" exists, nor attempts to give analyse it, rather assuming that "beauty" is a primitive property which one simply either experiences or fails to

[108] Cf. STIa.5.4 ad 1.
[109] *Glory* I, 20; 118.
[110] *Glory* I, 19

observe (an important respect in which aesthetic judgement resembles faith).[111] However, to flesh out Balthasar's account of content, we can distinguish two connected ways in which objects possess content. Firstly, when we consider works of art, we are often reminded of other objects which the artist intends to evoke. A mundane example is portraiture, where the artist deliberately attempts to represent a particular individual; yet the aesthetic resemblance between objects is often more distantly allusive, as in the case of modern art. As Frank Burch Brown observes, aesthetic expertise is needed to appreciate this content.[112] For example, Bach's Cantata 140 (*Wachet Auf*), might simply be discerned as "calm" by unfamiliar audiences, but to the informed listener rather "sounds like an exalted wake-up call, orderly but transcendent: both a count-down and a celebrative procession moving in anticipation…tolling the hour of midnight."

This notion of content, moreover, is distinct from the "form" which objects possess. This is partly because "content" consists of something "signified" or "pointed to" (i.e. the external object which is resembled) by the aesthetic object rather than anything contained "within" it. Thus one can understand that the same external object might be signified- even under largely the same manner of presentation- by many different objects. However, when Balthasar talks about the aesthetic "content" of beautiful objects, he generally seems to mean something intrinsic to the object, rather than its resemblance to other objects. Balthasar talks of "that [content,] which shines forth from the figure, making it into a…love worthy thing".[113] I think that Balthasar means that beautiful objects display- admittedly, in a particularly "luminous" and attractive way, the inherent richness of their "act of existence", which "shines through" and is glimpsed through the object's form and its relations. As with Miller's view of existence, beauty is not an emergent property which supervenes on an entity's fundamental properties, but the real constituting principle of a thing, differing only from "existence" insofar as "beauty" is a thing's existence rendered luminous and attractive. But even in this sense, the "content" within an object's "form" also functions as a signifier, because finite instances of beauty participate in and thus

[111] *Ibid.*, 20 "Such is the primal phenomenon. Whoever insists that he can neither see nor read it…falls into the void". Cf. *Love Alone*, 60: "one either sees [the glory of love] or one does not".
[112] Frank Burch Brown, *Good Taste, Bad Taste and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 13-14.
[113] *Glory* I, 20.

analogously resemble the fullness of divine Beauty. In this respect, Balthasar's analysis of beauty resembles Rahner's ontology, since it is not merely the case that since finitely beautiful objects participate in an infinitely beautiful Being, but further that a "pre-apprehension" of infinite Beauty or Being somehow facilitates aesthetic/ontological judgements.[114] Balthasar talks of this *vorgriff* in terms of the "light" of rational nature, which is (as in Rahner) elevated by grace to become the *lumen fidei*.[115]

Balthasar is keen to affirm that knowledge is necessarily gained through the senses. He considers that beauty is apprehended not via an *a priori* vision of beautiful forms, but by contact with particular beautiful objects. Thus Balthasar talks of the "light" needed to perceive beauty shining out *from* such objects themselves. Consequently, both our particular aesthetic judgements and our wider knowledge of beauty derived from them, are incalculable and unexpected like loving relationships.[116] Balthasar wishes to maintain that humans have an inherent *potential* to perceive beauty. However, Balthasar generally denies the possibility of reading off anything concrete about the nature of beauty from this potential. The actual nature of beauty must be discovered by encounter.

Perhaps Balthasar's view can be illustrated with reference to Rahner's notion of the *vorgriff*. Recall that according to Rahner, in order to make sense of our capacity to predicate properties of objects, we must have a notion of "being"(the ability to be "known"). Since "knowability" is not necessarily a limited property, there must stand on the "horizon" of our categorical thought the "transcendental" notion of unlimited Being. Balthasar would not, I think, deny much of what Rahner affirms in this vein.[117] However, he would wish to stress that our transcendental "knowledge" of being is really just the knowledge (or perhaps better, the necessity to admit on reflection that) finite beings can only exist insofar as they participate in an infinitely rich reality to which they therefore bear some resemblance. For Balthasar, any *vorgriff* does not give us any notion of what Being really is, as if it constituted the perception of the form of being as perhaps envisaged by an Augustinian account of illumination. In

[114] Cf. *Glory* I, 164- "It is the light of Being which enables us to know all existents, though we never behold Being itself as an object; at the same time, however, we *do* behold Being in every existent, since anything we know can be known only in the light of Being and from the viewpoint of Being".
[115] *Ibid.*, 165
[116] *Love Alone*, 52-4.
[117] For material which seems close to affirming a *vorgriff*, cf. *Glory* I, 159-171.

Balthasar's view, we lack any positive knowledge of "being" which is not mediated through finite, concrete, perceptible objects.

One final point should be made about the element of "depth" in Balthasar's aesthetics. According to Balthasar, it the "reality" of the perceived objects breaking through from its form which witnesses to the fact that our perception of the beautiful is not merely a matter of pleasure on the part of the subject, or the projection of beauty from the "eye of the beholder" onto the perceived object. Thus in the case of Christ, one can see that "what is involved is not at all a projection of the mythopoeic religious imagination, but rather the masterpiece of the divine fantasy, which puts all human fantasy to nought".[118]

2.2 Balthasar on the Act of Faith

Having sketched Balthasar's "natural" aesthetics, it is possible to examine his contention that the act of faith is analogous to aesthetic perception. I have indicated that for Balthasar, in glimpsing finite instances of beauty, we are led to contemplate divine Beauty. Yet Balthasar stresses that in such perceptions, we become aware of divine beauty by way of analogy, securing only a partial and distant glimpse of God. [119] Following the First Vatican Council, Balthasar alleges that not everything about God's nature is discernible by "natural" reason via an appreciation of the *analogia entis*. In particular, it is impossible to discover that divine Beauty is not merely infinite act, but a "dynamic" community of persons eternally shaped by mutual love. Balthasar regards the Trinity as a "super-form", constituting the Beauty in which other beings participate. The difference between the natural and supernatural possibilities for understanding Beauty leads Balthasar to distinguish between "aesthetic theology" and "theological aesthetics". By this, Balthasar means that his project in *The Glory of the Lord* is not to illustrate, using "natural" aesthetic concepts ("worldly" elegance, harmony etc.), the attractive form of Christian doctrine. Rather, Balthasar wishes to let the Trinitarian Beauty revealed in God's interactions with the world (paradigmatically, in Christ as the summit and interpretive key to salvation-history) provide its own aesthetic criteria according to which the proportions and depths of

[118] *Ibid.*, 172.
[119] *Ibid.*, 167.

salvation history can be understood. Balthasar's position diverges considerably from Rahner's here. For Rahner, although revelation imparts fresh "categorical" truths, at the "transcendental" level grace is universally present as the supernatural self-offering of God. By contrast, although Balthasar adopts the Scotist/Barthian notion that we are created in and for Christ, such that the distinction between "natural" and "gracious" orders of being is practically removed, he simultaneously claims that in the order of historical revelation and human consciousness, the revelation of divine Beauty in Christ is new and *scandalous* to sinful humanity.

For Balthasar, faith is tantamount to the act of aesthetic perception which recognises Trinitarian Beauty and commits the perceiver to contemplating this beauty and conforming her life to it.[120] Like Rahner and parts of Thomistic tradition, the formal object of faith and theology for Balthasar is just God Himself.[121] Faith, constitutes a "*theoria*" or contemplative vision of God which foreshadows the unmediated perception of God in the beatific vision.[122] In accordance with his broadly Thomistic epistemology, Balthasar emphasises that God's Beauty (in Biblical language, his glory/*doxa*/*kabod*) is only known to *viatores* through the perception of His visible actions towards us. It might seem, therefore, that humans will never be able to advance beyond an analogical perception of God through creation, if even in God's gracious dealings with humanity, His Beauty is only glimpsed through His effects. However, Balthasar claims that the distance between the finite "form" of beautiful objects and the divine Beauty to which they point is removed in the Incarnation. Christ has a sensible human nature which *viatores* were capable of perceiving during his ministry, but this form is entirely dependent on and penetrated by the Son's *hypostasis*, which is united to the divine essence. Uniquely, the human form of Christ reveals the depths of the divine nature to which it is united. In particular,

[120] Balthasar and commentators often talk about an *analogy* between aesthetic perception and faith, rather than their identity. However, so far as I can see the emphasis on analogy is simply intended to maintain the distinction between natural and supernatural perceptions of beauty. Cf. *Glory* Vol. I, 36. Similarly, Balthasar draws an analogy between faith and inter-personal knowledge between human lovers, whilst urging that we really possess in Christ a knowledge of God as Love and a loving relationship to Him, albeit of a character far-surpassing natural human love. Cf. *Love Alone*, 53.
[121] *Glory* I, 181.
[122] Although what follows can sound like abstract speculation, Balthasar attempts to base himself on Biblical data. In particular, several Johannine themes combine in Balthasar's treatment of faith: the description of faith as *sight* (e.g. Jn 1:14; 9), an emphasis on the revelation of divine glory (1:14; 13:31), the witness and obedience of the Son to the Father (12:44-5; 14:9) and the revelation in Christ as one of divine love (e.g. 13.34).

through his life of obedience to the Father in service to others, culminating with his death, resurrection and the sending of the Spirit, Christ reveals the essentially Trinitarian divine nature.[123]

Obviously, humans do not currently have access to Christ's form. As Brendan Leahy notes, Balthasar is therefore compelled to admit that the form of Christ is *mediated* to us by the witness of Scripture and the dogmatic, liturgical and pastoral traditions of the Church. [124] However, Balthasar claims that the beauty of Christ's form cannot be reduced to or easily deduced from Scripture or doctrinal formulations.[125] Rather, the believer with the "eyes of faith" somehow perceives Christ's form through the information about Him which these mediums impart, but which does not constitute the key-stone of revelation itself. Thus Balthasar criticises of historical analyses of Scripture which reduce the message of Scripture to disparate fundamental elements by searching for the evangelists' original authorial intention and the "historical Jesus" behind the text.[126] Just as the aesthetic value of a work of art can be overlooked by minute analysis of its constituent parts, so the image of Christ evident through the whole of Scripture as interpreted and enacted by the Church is ignored by modern Biblical criticism which "deconstructs" Scripture. The contemplation of Christ must be facilitated by an inner transformation of the perceiver by Christ's love, so that the "subject" and "object" of revelation mirror one another.[127] For Balthasar, as Avery Dulles observes[128], faith is therefore difficult to separate from hope and love, and constitutes a "loving surrender of one's whole person".[129]

2.3 Motivations for Balthasar's Model

In Balthasar's view, understanding faith as analogous to an act of aesthetic perception has notable advantages. It provides an alternative to problematic analyses of faith given by Neo-Scholasticism and the *Nouvelle Theologie*. On the one hand, Balthasar rejects the Neo-Scholastic consensus which

[123] *Glory* I, 479.
[124] Breandan Leahy, *Theological Aesthetics* in Bede McGregor and Thomas Norris ed. *The Beauty of Christ: A Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 41; cf. Aidan Nichols, *The Word Has Been Abroad: A Guide through Balthasar's Aesthetics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 47-57.
[125] *Glory* I, 32.
[126] *Glory* I, 174; 466.
[127] *Glory* I, 28; 484-6. Cf. *Love Alone* , 75: "The inner reality of love can be recognised only by love".
[128] Avery Dulles, *The Assurance of Things Hoped For: A Theology of Christian Faith*, (New York: OUP, 1994), 150.
[129] *Glory* I, 130.

viewed faith as an act of propositional assent to divinely revealed truths revealed, motivated by "motives of credibility". Balthasar objects to this account for several reasons. Firstly, Balthasar has sympathy for the criticism of Neo-Scholastic grace raised by Blondel and De Lubac. As John Riches notes, Blondel criticised Neo-Scholastic apologetics for failing to notice how grace fulfils our hopes, providing evidence of its reality by our existential transformation.[130] Balthasar echoes this criticism, suggesting some related points.[131] Firstly, in Balthasar's view, the Neo-Scholastic view risks changing the material object of faith from God to propositions about Him. This has the consequence that "true", direct knowledge of God waits on the beatific vision. By contrast, the Fathers and Aquinas suggest that faith is a beginning of beatific knowledge. Balthasar inveighs against the Scholastic adage "*fides quaerens intellectum*" which implies a distinction between faith and knowledge.[132] By contrast, Balthasar urges that Scripture and the Fathers teach that faith is a species of certain knowledge. Yet Balthasar suggests that to safeguard faith's certainty, Neo-Scholastic religious epistemologies either lapse into "evidentialism" which removes the freedom of faith's assent, or fall into fideism.[133] In all, Balthasar objects to the Neo-Scholastic characterisation of faith as provisional and propositional.

Balthasar simultaneously critiques the apologetic epistemologies of Blondel and the *Nouvelle Theologie*. Their project aimed to show that human experience indicates the possibility of existential transformation through grace, which provides decisive evidence for Christianity. Rahner's own apologetic, which attempts to demonstrate the possibility of gracious via "transcendental" examination of the possibilities of human knowledge, has similarities to Blondel's project. Balthasar commends De Lubac's reaction against an "extrinsicist" view of grace, and supports the attempt to illustrate Christianity's relevance. But the characterisation of revelation as something which can be anticipated as the fulfilment of human aspirations robs divine self-disclosure of its gratuity. Just as a particular loving relationship or beautiful art-work cannot be guaranteed by one's passive ability to love or to appreciate beauty, so the reception of grace is not guaranteed by our "obediential potency".

[130] John Riches, "Balthasar and the Analysis of Faith" in John Riches ed. *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 36-41.
[131] Cf. *Ibid*. 52-8.
[132] *Glory* I, 156.
[133] *Glory* I, 173.

Moreover, just as the particular content of a work of art cannot be anticipated, so the nature of grace cannot be prospectively deduced from our receptive capacities. Rather, revelation in Christ confronts humanity with an unanticipated standard of beauty which trumps our previous aesthetic/theological presuppositions. Further, in minimising the role of Neo-Scholastic historical apologetics, this analysis of faith approaches a Gnostic view of revelation as the imparting of timeless truths which lack relation to salvation history.

According to Balthasar, these two currents in Catholic fundamental theology suffer from a shared false assumption.[134] This assumption is that the historical events of revelation are merely *signs* of grace which indicate the credibility and/or reality of God's self-gift. Although Neo-Scholastics retained an important role for Christ's life by emphasising objective accounts of atonement, in fundamental theology Christ's miracles and resurrection were feted as "evidence" for the credibility of his message, which is largely propositional (and so, representational) in character. Balthasar rejects such "evidentialism" and "propositionalism". For their part, Blondel and Rahner tended to see Christ's life as merely an outward sign of God's love which can only be decisively encountered and made credible in individual experience. Balthasar sees this as a relativisation of the importance of historical revelation, which is rendered peripheral to the gospel's truth and relevance.

In Balthasar's view, seeing Christ's life and death as analogous to a beautiful object helps overcome the view that it *merely* acts as a sign, showing the credibility of revelation or God's love for us. In an aesthetic act, the "content" and "depth" of the object perceived, which constitute its reality, are only perceived through its particular form. Accordingly, it is inadmissible to solely ground the credibility of revelation in "evidence" provided by Christ's life, because this overlooks the beauty which shines out from it, revealing a reality which the perceiver cannot have created.[135] Balthasar's aesthetics stresses that we encounter beauty as something unexpected, the contours of which cannot be read of from any capacity for aesthetic perception. Consequently, it is improper to show the relevance of

[134] *Glory* I, 150.
[135] *Glory* I, e.g. 171-3.

grace by anticipating its nature given our hopes and desires.[136] Moreover, since beauty is never encountered except in the concrete, it is mistaken to ground the credibility of Christianity in any abstract experience of grace divorced from contemplation of Christ. Rather, the existential relevance and certainty of faith are given in the transformative experience of being drawn to contemplate and adore Christ's servant-form. Insofar as such contemplation includes the experience is of beauty alien to sinful humanity, this beauty is perceived as asserting its own reality over and against human imagination. Yet, just as in a natural act of aesthetic perception, the beholder is transfixed by the beauty of the object and drawn to contemplation by "erotic" desire.[137] This explains Balthasar's assertion that faith cannot easily exist without charity, because contemplation of Christ is bound up with attraction to His radiant form.[138] One who really believes cannot remain "indifferent" to revelation and regard grace as existentially unimportant.

2.4 Evaluation of Balthasar's Model

I have briefly elucidated Balthasar's model of faith, which represents an important alternative to Rahner's project in modern Catholic theology. I now offer a concise critique of this model. I have not yet explained Balthasar's proposals regarding the possibility of an "Anonymous Christianity", which as indicated above is a possibility he accepts despite surface hostility. This is because, in fact, Balthasar does not explain the possibility of anonymous Christianity; indeed, I shall suggest that it is difficult to account for on his epistemology. I return to the possibility of using Balthasar's insights constructively in regard to explaining anonymous Christian faith shortly.

In several respects, Balthasar's analysis of faith resembles "Reformed Epistemology". Balthasar rejects "evidentialist" accounts of faith's rationality in favour of a view on which Christian belief will seem rational to Christians if not to non-believers. The latter fail to perceive Christ's form, which when perceived properly reveals the depths of God's Being. As with believers for whom the IIHS is functioning properly, according to Balthasar Christians whose cognitive apparatus has been transformed to include the "eyes of faith" are in a privileged epistemic position to see the truth of

[136] *Glory* I, e.g. 179-80, 465; *Love Alone*, 52-60.
[137] *Glory* I, 121-3.
[138] *Glory* I, 192.

Christianity. Balthasar therefore rejects the notion of a level epistemic playing field between believers committed to Christian doxastic practices and their sceptical peers, which is partly caused by the lack of love in the latter. As for Plantinga, faith is a species of knowledge according to Balthasar, grounded in the gracious perfection of our cognitive faculties. Reformed Epistemologists have two means of showing that Christian beliefs possess internalist justification: either by appealing to their nature as basic beliefs supported by impulsional evidence, or to the fact that they are justified by doxastic practices which indicate their own reliability. On Balthasar's model, although faith does not principally consistent of propositional assent, such assent to articles of faith might be similarly justified. As with Plantinga's model on which "basic" beliefs are grounded in non-propositional "impulsional" evidence, so the non-propositional "beauty" perceived in Christ inclines one to belief that he is the locus of revelation. However, on Balthasar's account, faith has phenomenological grounds which Christian belief lacks on the "Extended A/C Model". Moreover, whereas on Alston's model, Christian doxastic practices demonstrate their own reliability, so on Balthasar's account, the "beauty" which shines forth from the object suggests to the perceiver that the object perceived is real and not an imaginative projection.

Balthasar also affirms, in line with CRE, that the assent of faith depends on the free response of the believer.[139] To my knowledge, he does not clearly explain this possibility, since at times he seems to assert that one cannot help perceiving the beauty of an object once it has become apparent.[140] However, perhaps Balthasar's idea is that one can choose not to accept the witness which the appearance of beauty makes to its own reality, since he appears to think that it is the loss of acceptance that beauty is an objective property which characterises modern lack of interest in metaphysics.[141] If so, Balthasar's model of faith as aesthetic perception would approach my view that divine faith is doxastic practice in which humans are drawn to engage, but can cynically reject.

The merits of Balthasar's religious epistemology are that it emphasises the properties of faith as gracious, certain and free. Further, on Balthasar's model, faith in Christ possesses "internalist"

[139] *Glory* I, 482; *Love Alone*, 60.
[140] *Love Alone*, 57.
[141] *Glory* I, 17-25.

justification insofar as it is anchored in non-propositional evidence that God reveals Himself in Christ. Although Balthasar does not to my knowledge discuss the issue of faith's certainty in the face of defeaters, I take it that he would appeal to the attractiveness of divine beauty which entices the observer to contemplation to safeguard such certainty, whilst allowing that this attractiveness can be overlooked. Such a claim would resemble my contention that Catholics have an inclination to make trust in the Church's teachings a fundamental doxastic practice, even though they might be tempted to make other practices fundamental when forming religious beliefs. Balthasar also succeeds in illustrating how the assent of faith is existentially relevant to the believer, whilst equally emphasising the importance of revelation in Christ, and its ability to challenge human preconceptions. Overall, Balthasar's account of faith seems balanced and nuanced, avoiding problems of both "evidentialist" and "Rahnerian" accounts of faith.

However, several elements of Balthasar's model seem problematic, the first of which represents a difference between Balthasar's model and CRE. Balthasar stresses that it is the revelation of divine glory which is the material object of faith rather than revealed propositions. Although I have focussed above on the propositional aspect of faith, I have not argued that all divine revelation is propositional. Analytic philosophers such as Stump have contended that although analytic philosophy has sometimes claimed that all knowledge is propositional, there are also non-propositional forms of knowledge, such as "interpersonal knowledge".[142] Perhaps Balthasar has correctly identified one kind of non-propositional knowledge which God reveals to us in Christ- viz. "aesthetic" knowledge: knowledge of how God's Being manifests itself in Christ.

However, it also seems important to allow that propositional assent forms part of faith. Firstly, recall that correctly perceiving the form of Christ is integral to faith on Balthasar's account. Since Christ's form is mediated through Scripture and the Church, and much of this mediation is propositional, presumably assenting to true propositions about Christ's is practically necessary to understand

[142] i.e. non-propositional knowledge of what it is like to interact with another person and (Stump claims) also direct knowledge *of* the other person which is gained by such interaction. Just as Balthasar believes that our knowledge of Christ's glory is possible even though his form is "mediated" by Scripture and the Church, so too Stump holds that we can gain inter-personal knowledge of someone without having "direct" contact with her, through media such as letters or stories. Cf. Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (New York, OUP 2010), 49-63.

Christ's sacrifice, which can then appear as the self-authenticating revelation of divine glory. Balthasar might suggest that even so, propositional assent is merely a necessary *preparation* for the act of faith, which is concerned with accepting not propositions about Christ, but his life/form *per se*. Yet at the phenomenological level, it may be difficult to distinguish between propositional assent and aesthetic judgement. For example, once I have understood (say, by the testimony of a guide prior to entering the National Gallery) that Turner's painting *Rain, Steam and Speed* shows a hare running from the oncoming train, my appreciation of the beauty of the painting may be bound up with assent to this proposition. Assent to this proposition draws attention to part of the painting which I might otherwise miss, and adds to my understanding of its significance as a reflection on technological progress. Further, my appreciation of the very beauty and depths of the painting might henceforth be coloured and structured by knowledge that the hare is running. Put differently, there is a particular beauty to be appreciated in the propositional content embodied in or evoked by an art-work. In the same way, propositional belief that "Christ died for my sins" might colour one's aesthetic "perception" of the form of Christ. One finds Christ's form glorious partly because one perceives (propositionally) that it is the form of the Saviour. Balthasar might reply that there is still a fundamental difference between propositional assent and aesthetic perception, even if the latter is coloured by the former. As such, it might be possible for Balthasar to maintain that faith consists in aesthetic perception which is non-propositional, even though propositional knowledge contributes to the appreciation of Christ's beauty. Still, the analysis suggested above at least shows that propositional belief might be very tightly bound up with the assent of faith, and that accordingly it is perhaps more important for faith than Balthasar sometimes implies.

Secondly, if Balthasar wishes faith to present faith as an "act of the whole person", in which the revelation of God is accepted and adored, it seems strange to exclude propositional assent from this act, since much of our intellectual lives consists of propositional assent. Finally, from a Scriptural perspective, it might be argued that Balthasar's account rests too much on the Johannine account of faith as "vision". Other parts of the New Testament, e.g. James (2:19) and Hebrews (11:6) evince an

understanding of faith which is in part propositional, and stresses the discontinuity between our present and future knowledge of God.

Another problem with Balthasar's model of faith is its difficulty in accounting for the possibility of Anonymous Christianity. This stems from Balthasar's claim that it is beholding Christ's form in particular which fully reveals God's nature in a supernatural way. Given Balthasar's insistence that our appreciation of beauty is mediated by particular acts of aesthetic perception, and his emphasis on the uniqueness of Christ's form, it is difficult to see how non-Christians can ever properly have supernatural faith *in Christ*, and the depths of divinity which He reveals. Balthasar almost denies this possibility, writing that "anyone who in whatever way attempts to come to God by bypassing Christ is not true to the witness of the Trinity and, therefore, to faith itself".[143] However, he affirms that it is possible for non-Christians to have saving faith, which is somehow mediated through non-Christian religions.[144] Perhaps Balthasar's thought might be developed as follows. Some non-Christian religious figures and philosophies suggest that dynamic relationships based on agape partake in Beauty, meaning that God must contain (analogously) such relationships. Thereby, non-Christian religions can indirectly give some knowledge of the Triune God. Although Balthasar could maintain that it is only in Christ that we receive full and immediate knowledge of God as Love, this move would nevertheless relativise his position that only Christ reveals the depths of divinity.

Finally, in one respect Balthasar's analysis of faith represents only a small improvement over Rahner's: that of metaphysical peculiarity. As noted above, Balthasar seems to broadly accept Rahner's theory of the *vorgriff*, which rests on controversial metaphysical claims. Additionally, Balthasar makes contestable claims about aesthetics, such as the "convertibility" of being and beauty. As with Rahner, Balthasar's position is grounded in the thought of Aquinas, and so should be taken seriously by Catholic philosophers. Yet the time when a position could simply be justified in Catholic theology by an appeal to Aquinas is past, and it seems desirable that contemporary Catholic models of faith are compatible with a variety of metaphysical positions.

[143] *Glory* I, 155.
[144] *Glory* I, 167-9.

3.0 An Alternative Proposal

I now lay out an alternative model explaining how non-Christians might have divine faith in Christ, drawing on suggestions from Rahner and Balthasar. I first give a brief account of the model, before giving reason to consider it plausibly true. I do not, however, attempt to argue that my model is the only way to account for the possibility of Anonymous Christianity, or to provide compelling reason for Catholics to believe that my account is true. Finally, I argue that my suggested model for Anonymous Christianity is compatible with CRE. I should first stress, however, that my model below is compatible with the contention of D'Costa that merely the disposition to believe in divine revelation is insufficient for salvation, which for explicit non-believers requires a post-mortem encounter with Christ and formation of explicit faith (i.e. divine faith proper). My model shows how such non-believers might be disposed to accept such future revelation on the basis of their current intellectual commitments.

3.1 A Model for Anonymous Faith in Christ

Balthasar drew attention to the importance of aesthetic perception for understanding the act of faith. Unlike Balthasar, I do not wish to reduce faith to an act of aesthetic perception, particularly if the latter is non-propositional. However, Balthasar drew attention to two important aspects of Christ's revelation relevant to my model. Firstly, I suggest that God is beautiful: as Balthasar alleged, He is the paradigmatic form of Beauty. To be beautiful, I suggest, is to participate in God. Accordingly to recognise something as beautiful is to affirm (*de re*) that it participates in divine Beauty. If this ontology of Beauty necessarily holds on theism, then given that the premise that God necessarily exists, this ontology is likewise necessarily true. Balthasar also suggested that the possibility of affirming finite instances of beauty necessarily implied the existence (and perhaps some "pre-apprehension") of an infinite Beauty as the "horizon" against which all finite affirmations of limited instantiations of beauty are intelligible. Whilst my model does not require such an affirmation of an aesthetic *vorgriff*, it is compatible with it. Secondly, Balthasar asserts that we glimpse divine Beauty through created forms and God's actions towards humanity, particularly in the person of Christ,

whose form is imprinted on faithful Christians. According to Balthasar, the phenomenology of aesthetic perception leads humans to affirm that beauty is not something which they have projected onto the perceived object. These insights of Balthasar can be combined with Rahner's analysis of implicit belief in God to explain the possibility of Anonymous Christianity.

Balthasar is correct to affirm a tendency on the part of humans to accede to the view that beauty is an objective property. Relatedly, I suggest that humans have a tendency to believe stories, theories and explanations of phenomena *just because those stories, theories and explanations are beautiful, or (better) entail the beauty of reality if true*. In other words, humans are inclined to engage in the practice of "forming beliefs in line with theories which are themselves beautiful" as a basic epistemic practice. I term this practice "aesthetically-guided belief formation". If true, this means that we have a tendency to accept theories on the basis that these theories are perceived as beautiful, which given the above ontology of beauty means that they participate in Beauty. I am not claiming that this disposition is overriding or always functions as a fundamental belief-forming procedure; many may see aesthetically-guided belief formation as naïve "wishful thinking".

I defined implicit belief above as the disposition to believe a proposition under circumstances relevant to its consideration. Insofar as someone is engaged in "aesthetically-guided belief formation" she has a disposition to affirm that the necessary preconditions of this practice exist.[145] Given that the practice consists of believing theories on the basis that they are in fact beautiful, the existence of God is one of these preconditions if He necessarily exists as the ground of beauty. Since many non-Christians are engaged in the practice of aesthetically-guided belief-formation, they will likewise be disposed to affirm (*de dicto*) the existence of whatever are in fact the necessary preconditions of their practice. Since these necessary preconditions include God's existence, belief that they obtain constitutes *de re*

[145] One might wonder why I have suggested that it is engagement in "aesthetically-guided belief formation" rather than merely engagement in "aesthetic perception" (if the latter is regarded by the perceiver as an objective exercise) that grounds "implicit" faith in God. My thought here is that the act of faith has been traditionally thought to consist in propositional belief in addition to aesthetic perception. Admittedly, merely in virtue of being committed to the practice of aesthetic perception, one can possess a disposition to propositionally affirm the ontological preconditions of such an act, and so have an "implicit" belief in divine Beauty. However, in such a case the vast majority of one's epistemic practices will not be involved in the submission to divine revelation which is, as Rahner and Balthasar suggest, supposed to transform every element of human existence. By grounding the "implicit" faith of explicit non-believers in the practice of "aesthetically-guided belief formation", my model is able to suggest that their wider epistemic practices might also be "elevated" by grace.

belief that He exists. Thus, non-believers committed to aesthetically-guided belief formation may have *de re* implicit belief in God. However, I stressed above that a disposition to believe in the necessary preconditions of one's current beliefs or practices might not be wholehearted, since it might not extend to believing in preconditions which one otherwise regards as highly improbable. Accordingly, whilst some explicit non-Christians will have implicit *de re* belief in God because of their engagement in aesthetically-guided belief-formation, these may be only those who are strongly committed to the practice, or who do not take the existence of God to be highly improbable. Might such non-believers have implicit *de dicto* belief in God? I argued above that it is less plausible to ascribe implicit belief in a proposition to subjects who would only affirm that proposition in light of their current epistemic commitments if they were provided with a significant amount of new information about that proposition and its relation to their current beliefs. Since it would be surprising and difficult for many atheists to learn that God grounds creaturely beauty, I do not claim that many atheists have *de dicto* implicit belief in God on this basis.

Divine faith is a supernatural habit, and it might be objected that the practice of "aesthetically-guided belief formation" is a natural intellectual habit. Similarly, it seems that engagement in this doxastic practice need only yield implicit faith in God as the Form of Beauty, rather than in God who reveals Himself. However, as Balthasar suggests, aesthetic perceptions are not all of a piece. Some apparently secular aesthetic perceptions may reveal more about the nature of God than others. Given the plausibility of Rahner's thesis that pure nature is a "remainder-concept", perhaps some of our everyday aesthetic experiences serve to mediate a "supernatural" knowledge of divine Beauty. In particular, one might note with Stephen Fields that human lives which evince complete self-giving in love- Fields cites the life of Bl. Mother Theresa- mirror the sacrifice of the cross. [146]

The perception of the beauty of such lives is "supernatural" in two ways. Firstly, Balthasar claims that the life of Christ reveals the eternal love and self-giving of the immanent Trinity.[147] If true, then one who has implicit belief on the basis of her commitment to aesthetically-guided belief formation, and

[146] Stephen Fields, "The Beauty of the Ugly: Balthasar, the Crucifixion, Analogy and God", *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 9 (2) (2007), 181.
[147] *Glory* I, 171; 479.

who likewise affirms the beauty of Christ's form indirectly (via its reflection in human charity), implicitly believes in God as Triune rather than merely infinitely beautiful *Esse Subsistens*. According to the Catechism, knowledge of God as Triune is only possible through God's gracious revelation.[148] Additionally, it seems possible that the affirmation of the broad vista of beauty evinced in radical love of other challenges our natural aesthetic preferences and attendant doxastic practices. This may be indicated by the fact that even aside from the explicit aesthetic challenge of the cross which constituted a "stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles", some thinkers are strongly inclined to reject the broad aesthetic/moral vision of Christianity in other contexts (cf. Nietzsche's polemic against "slave moralities"). Thus implicit Christian faith may involve a struggle against natural or fallen aesthetic inclinations to accept the particular beauty of objects which evince God's Triune love.

My suggested model for anonymous Christian involves the contentious claim that God is the form of Beauty in which all beautiful entities participate. Ideally, I would offer a philosophical argument for this claim given the truth of classical theism, to render my suggested model more plausible to Catholics. Since I lack space to construct such an argument, I merely note that the claim that God is the form of Beauty has very considerable pedigree in Catholic theological tradition. In a Neo-Platonist context, Augustine affirms that God is the Form of Beauty,[149] inchoate "interior" knowledge of which enables other aesthetic judgements. In a different key, Aquinas who held that beauty is a "transcendental" property,[150] and who were committed to an analysis of God as *Esse Subsistens* likewise affirmed that God was perfectly Beautiful and bestowed a fragmented beauty on creatures.[151] Richard Viladesau, who traces the commitment to God as the Form of Beauty at length, notes that despite debate, many Neo-Scholastic authors likewise affirm that beauty is a transcendental, and so grounded in God's Being.[152]

---

[148] *CCC* 237/p.56.
[149] E.g. *Conf.* X.27.
[150] E.g. STIa.5.4.ad1.
[151] Cf. Richard Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*: *God in Imagination, Beauty and Art* (New York: OUP, 1999), 114-15.
[152] Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 103-34. One might object that whereas the transcendentals are ontologically one and thus "convertible", beauty is not properly convertible with transcendental properties such

3.2 Aesthetically-Guided Belief Formation

I have suggested that humans are disposed to believe theories which evince beauty. This might seem implausible: when asked to give justification for their beliefs, people rarely straightforwardly state that the propositions they affirm are held on an aesthetic basis. I now give reason to think that, even if beliefs are rarely explicitly justified on the basis that they are the products of "aesthetically-guided belief formation", humans nevertheless have a disposition to engage in this doxastic practice. To this end, I briefly give examples of engagement in aesthetically-guided belief formation primarily from philosophical literature.

One principle widely invoked when rationally adjudicating between rival theories is "the principle of parsimony" (Ockham's razor). Alan Baker notes that this principle, widely touted as an important methodological tool across disciplines, is sometimes defended by an appeal to the increased beauty which parsimonious theories evince. [153] Such an appeal to beauty sometimes underlies even apparently more pragmatic attempts to justify the principle. Dorothy Walsh, for example, recommends Ockham's razor on the grounds that it is a "principle of intellectual elegance", because it recommends theories of equal explanatory scope in proportion to their "elegance", by which is meant "intrinsic intelligibility". [154] Walsh argues that the role of theories is to render phenomena more comprehensible, making "intelligibility" a theoretical desideratum. Simple theories are easier to understand, and so meet this desideratum better than complex alternatives. Notably, however, Walsh uses the aesthetic term "elegance" to describe "intelligibility". She further talks of "elegant" theories as "intrinsically perspicuous" and shining with "luminosity". This suggests a similarity between the way in which simple theories are attractive and the manner in which, according to Balthasar, beautiful objects reveal the "depths" of their being (i.e. the reality of their intelligible "content"). If Balthasar's analysis of aesthetic perception is correct, the desire for "intelligibility" in theorising which Walsh points to might also be characterised as an aesthetic desire. Further, Walsh's argument concedes that although

---

as goodness, because a being can be highly beautiful yet equally evil. Hence some Thomists, such as Eleonore Stump, refer to beauty as a pseudo-transcendental (private communication).

[153] Baker, Alan, "Simplicity", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/simplicity/>.

[154] Dorothy Walsh, "Occam's Razor: A Principle of Intellectual Elegance", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16 (3) (1979), 241-44.

we cannot necessarily prove that simpler theories are more probable than more complex alternatives, since "explanation is a human intellectual exercise", the criteria for successful explanation reasonably reveal more about our intellectual predilections than extra-mental truth. This suggests a further possible development of her argument. Presumably the ease with which humans can understand theories is connected not merely to their "simplicity", but to their broader aesthetic attractiveness which draws the theorist to appreciate the explanation. Indeed, Charles Taliaferro and Jil Evans argue that there is considerable evidence that the beauty of particular scientific explanations draws scientists to prefer those explanations which are more beautiful, with many of the quotations they cite from scientists emphasising the beauty of "simple" theories.[155] I am not arguing that the principle of parsimony must be defended with recourse to aesthetic considerations, or that it is only the aesthetic properties of simple theories which incline humans to accept them. Yet this does appear to be one area in which humans are inclined to engage in "aesthetically-guided belief formation", which is closely related to common arguments for atheism.

Another indication that humans have a disposition to engage in this practice is found in the ways in which we form ethical judgements. This inclination is evinced throughout Western philosophy, beginning with the Greek identification of the good and the beautiful. Yet notably, the connection between value and beauty can be discovered even in varieties of modern atheism which reject certain classical and Christian notions of value. Nietzsche is well known for his excoriating "genealogical" critique of Christianity as an internalised and re-directed form of *ressentiment*. The precise implications and strategy behind this genealogical critique are debated. However, it is widely noted that Nietzsche's project is not *purely* negative. Although sometimes criticised for attempting to mount an ethical criticism of "Christianity" despite allowing no room for knowledge of objective moral truth, Nietzsche aims to promote a positive, "life-affirming" ethic which is characterised in terms of "good and bad" rather than "good and evil" and promotes the exercise of the will. Thus, as De Lubac notes,

[155] Charles Taliaferro and Jil Evans, *The Image in Mind: Theism, Naturalism and the Imagination* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 46.

Nietzsche's philosophy represents a conscious choice to undertake and affirm the "death of God", rather than merely a negative assessment of "Christian" morality. [156]

As Daniel Conway notes, an important part of Nietzsche's project is the recasting of morality in terms of what makes for the sickness/health of the human species. [157] One might wonder how Nietzsche arrives at an assessment of what makes for human flourishing without invoking moral or metaphysical assumptions which he disavows. At least at the rhetorical level, the answer seems to be that he makes *aesthetic* judgements about the "noble" life lived beyond good and evil. Consider the following passage describing life after the death of God: "Hearing that the old god is dead, we feel ourselves illumined as by a new dawn…at last the horizon…is free once more; now once more the pioneer of knowledge has licence to attempt whatever he will: the whole expanse of the seas, *our* sea, is accessible to us once more."[158] The beautiful, boundless landscape here mentioned is to serve as an attractive picture of the capacity for human action without moral obligations. By contrast, obedience to "Christian" demands of selfless love of God and neighbour are rendered not only an inefficient and counter-productive product of *ressentiment*, but also an *unattractive*, ugly or ridiculous form of life. In this respect, Nietzsche famously calls Christianity a "herd morality". He also evokes stranger images, such as the risible comparison between a compassionate man and a Cyclops with tiny hands.[159] Nietzsche even makes exaggerated appeals to the use of the bodily senses in diagnosing the sickness of 19th century humanity: "Whoever has not only his nose for smelling, but also his eyes and ears, senses almost everywhere he might go today something like the air of an insane asylum",[160] and talks of his difference of "tastes" regarding the Old and New Testaments.[161]

I am not claiming that the appeal to the beauty of life lived beyond "good and evil" is Nietzsche's only reason for advocating the latter. Nor am I acquitting Nietzsche of the charge of having a self-

[156] Henri De Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995), 49-50.
[157] Daniel Conway, "Genealogy and Critical Method" in Richard Schacht ed. *Nietzsche, Genealogy and Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals* (Los Angeles: California UP, 1994), 322.
[158] Cited in De Lubac, *The Drama*, 58.
[159] *Beyond Good and Evil*, 171.
[160] *Genealogy of Morals*, 3.14.
[161] *Ibid* 3.22.

defeating argument, since he also rejected an objective theory of beauty.[162] However, it is noteworthy that even in attempting to deny morality and metaphysics, Nietzsche made an argument which depends- at least, rhetorically - upon engagement in the practice of "aesthetically-guided belief formation". This provides modest evidence for my contention that even atheists habitually engage in that practice.

4.0 Conclusion

I have presented a model for Anonymous Christianity which allows implicit faith to maintain many of the aspects which I was keen to model above in my preferred explanation of the relationship between explicit faith and reason. To recap, on the former model, non-Christians may be committed to the practice of "aesthetically-guided belief formation" as one of their basic epistemic practices. If so, then they may have *de re* implicit belief in a fundamental article of revelation. This is because if quizzed they would likely affirm the existence of the preconditions for the possibility of this practice, which include the existence of the Triune God. Note that as with CRE, this doxastic practice plausibly meets externalist, proper-function requirements for forming justified beliefs. God may well have designed humans with a propensity to engage in this practice so that we can form broadly accurate beliefs about explanatory theories and moral values due to their beauty. Moreover, engagement in the practice of aesthetically-guided belief-formation may easily be justified in an internalist sense for many practitioners, if engagement in the practice is based on impulsional evidence. This leaves room for the assent of the "anonymous Christian" to be freely chosen, since the practice of "aesthetically-guided belief formation" may come into conflict with other basic belief-forming practices grounded in impulsional evidence and prompt a choice on the part of the believer as to which is to be fundamental.[163] Finally, although there may be a natural habit of aesthetically-guided belief-formation, this doxastic practice may be elevated by grace so that it consists of making judgement based on an implicit perception of the beauty of the Trinity. It is in part the "elevation" of

[162] For this, and Nietzsche's complex attitude to aesthetic knowledge, cf. Sebastian Gardner, "Nietzsche's Philosophical Aestheticism" in Ken Gemes and John Richardson ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche* (New York: OUP, 2013).
[163] Cf. my explanation of the possibility of explicit faith being freely chosen and my suggestion that such freedom is required by magisterial sources such as the Council of Trent, above (Ch1, 2.1).

aesthetically-guided belief formation which means that for the anonymous Christian, accepting grace will be cognitively and affectively challenging.[164]

In short, if my model is successful it explains how Anonymous Christianity is not only possible, but also how implicit faith can meet the *desiderata* for a model of divine faith in a similar manner to the analysis of explicit faith which I have termed CRE. Further, I have suggested that the doxastic practice in which implicit faith is grounded may actually be exercised in the very judgements by which atheists explicitly maintain their atheism, such as when they are attracted to atheism on the basis of its simplicity. This holds *a fortiori*, I suggest, for believers who in fact take themselves to be evidentialists, yet whose faith is in part grounded in the an appreciation of the beauty of revelation. In the gift of the appreciation of beauty and its connection to truth, God may provide a path for non-culpable non-believers to reach divine faith.

[164] The reader may note that much of this paragraph has consisted of hypothetical statements about what might be the case. This is because it is only my aim to present a model of implicit faith which plausibly fulfils meets the desiderata for a Catholic account of faith, rather than to argue for the truth of that model and its enabling conditions.

Chapter Three: Augustine on Faith and Reason

1.0 Introduction

In the first chapter, I developed a Catholic model of faith and reason (CRE) which draws on the work of Reformed Epistemologists. I further compared CRE to alternative religious epistemologies proposed by Catholic philosophers, and argued that CRE better fits the desiderata for a Catholic analysis of faith. However, since the thought of authors in Catholic tradition is taken to be highly important (though not a *sine qua non*) for the formulation of positions in Catholic theology, it is important in advancing CRE to show that it can claim affinity with traditional analyses of faith. I will aim to show that whilst some authors in the tradition might *prima facie* appear to endorse positions which I have criticised, on deeper investigation it transpires that they are either endorsing positions closer to CRE, or at least that their support for other models is ambiguous and/or in tension with their other commitments. In this enterprise I am building on previous research, including that of John Lamont, who has already argued that several Church Fathers advance an understanding of the rationality of faith which does not primarily appeal to evidence, but rests upon accepting divine revelation in a "basic" manner. [1]

I begin by examining the views of St. Augustine. Whilst Augustine's work is highly influential within the Western tradition, this is not the only reason that it merits attention. Augustine has long been cited to support divergent understandings of the role which evidence plays in justifying faith. Historically, the first *quaestio* of Abelard's *Sic et Non Sic* (c.1120) is entitled '*Quod fides humanis rationibus non sit adstruenda et contra*'. In context, Abelard appears to be asking whether faith should be based on evidence acceptable to sceptics. Notably, he quotes Augustine as an authority both for and against this position. More recently, Lamont asserts that "If we were to ask Augustine why it is that faith is certain, it is unlikely that he would enumerate any of the signs [i.e. miracles, the growth of the Church, etc.] found in his Letter 137", thus disputing the charge that Augustine is an evidentialist. [2]

[1] John Lamont, *Divine Faith* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 30-46; "A Conception of Faith in the Greek Fathers", in Oliver Crisp and Michael Rea (ed.) *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2009).
[2] Lamont, *Divine Faith*, 43.; cf. *Ep*. 137.16.

Indeed, as Keith Mascord notes, Plantinga has stressed affinities in his thought with the broad Augustinian intellectual tradition, including the idea that propositions of faith can be integrated into wider reasoning. [3] By contrast, Norman Kretzmann provides an outline of Augustine's epistemology which endorses an evidentialist account of the rationality of belief. [4] This divergence of interpretation is well represented in modern scholarship, with commentators often keen to read their own views into Augustine's thought. [5] One factor contributing to the lack of consensus is perhaps, as John Kenney suggests, a reluctance to accept that Augustine is not a strictly systematic thinker, whose views developed over time. [6] Unlike some authors, I will not claim that Augustine's views are identical to my own. Yet I hope to demonstrate that important lines of his thought are compatible with the view that rational trust in the teachings of an authority need not be based on evidence considered acceptable by classical foundationalism. I shall further attempt to show that Augustine to some extent anticipates the need for a version of "Reformed Epistemology" which satisfies a negative internalist constraint on justification, and which places emphasis on the gracious nature of belief. At some stages, Augustine also emphasised the importance of belief being a matter of libertarian creaturely choice, although he eventually retracted this position.

---

[3] Keith Mascord, *Alvin Plantinga and Christian Apologetics* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 186. Cf. Alvin Plantinga, "Augustinian Christian Philosophy", *The Monist*, 75 (3) (1992).

[4] Norman Kretzmann, "Faith Seeks, Understnding Finds: Augustine's Charter for Christian Philosophy" (1990) in Thomas Flint (ed.) *Christian Philosophy* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1990), 7.

[5] Additional authors who give (sometimes, cursory) readings of Augustine as an "evidentialist"- or at least, imply that faith is primarily rationally grounded in evidence- include: Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (London: Burns and Oates, 1970), 126-7, 234) Eugène Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine* (London: Burns & Oates, 1960),114-119; Magnus Löhrer, *Der Glaubensbegriff des hl. Augustinus in sienen ersten Schriften bis zu den Confessiones* (Einsiedeln: Benzinger, 1955), 145-173.; Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* (London: V. Gollancz, 1961), 30; Avery Dulles, *The Assurance of Things Hoped For: A Theology of Christian Faith* (New York: OUP 1994), 26; Louis Pojman, *Religious Belief and the Will* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986) 21-31, Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1969), 30; James Dutton, *Augustine and Academic Scepticism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2016), 112-19; Mascord, *Alvin Plantinga*, 188-190, and Scott MacDonald, "Augustine" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Epistemology of Theology* (Oxford, OUP 2017), 359. Further "Reformed" readings are given at greater length by Paul MacDonald, "The Epistemology of Faith in Augustine and Aquinas" in Phillip Cary (ed.) *Augustine and Philosophy* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010) and, to some extent, Dewey Hoitenga, *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga: An Introduction to Reformed Epistemology* (Albany: State University of NY Press 1991), 57-142; esp. 135-42. Roger Aubert, *Le Problème de l'Acte de Foi: Données Traditionelles et Résultats de Controverses Récentes*, 2nd ed. (Louvain: Pub. de Univ. Louvain 1950) 21-30, and Gerald O'Collins, *Saint Augustine on the Resurrection of Christ: Teaching, Rhetoric and Reception* (Oxford: OUP, 2017) 32-59, highlight both Augustine's apologetic appeal to publicly available evidence and his emphasis on the role of "internal" divine inspiration in justifying faith.

[6] John Kenney, "Faith and Reason" in David Meconi and Eleonore Stump (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine: Second Edition* (Cambridge, CUP 2014), 276.

I start by exploring concepts key to understanding Augustine's epistemology, such as his use of the terms faith and knowledge, which differ in definition from modern philosophical usage. Having thus outlined a basic understanding of Augustine's epistemology (Section 2), I then contend that his deepest commitments support the "Reformed" notion that one can responsibly engage in religious belief-forming procedures without evidence for their reliability (Section 3). Firstly, I consider the proffered evidence that Augustine is an evidentialist. I then show the limitations of this evidence, and explore progressively stronger reasons for holding that Augustine rejected any classical foundationalist form of evidentialism (or should have rejected it by his own lights). In the course of this discussion, it becomes obvious that as in CRE, Augustine strongly affirms the necessity for grace to aid the act of faith. Further, Augustine affirmed that there is a role for free will in coming to faith-although Augustine's appraisal of "free will" changed over time. I then turn to the question of whether Augustine would have accepted the "internalist" constraint which CRE places on justification, before concluding by reviewing the extent of similarity between Augustine's religious epistemology and CRE (Section 4).

2.0 Augustine's Epistemological Foundations

Initially, it will be helpful to elucidate what Augustine meant by "faith" and "reason" (or "understanding"), as the failure to distinguish various meanings which he gives to these terms can result in problematic interpretations of his thought.[7] In this section I explore the underlying concepts and structures in Augustine's epistemology before moving to evaluate its relationship to Reformed Epistemology. Eugene TeSelle divides Augustine's consideration of religious faith (*fides*)[8] into three parts: believing (*credere*) "Deum", "Deo" and "in Deum".[9] In the first sense, faith just means

[7] For example, Hoitenga (*Faith and Reason*, 61) complains that Augustine is inconsistent in maintaining both that belief is incompatible with knowledge (since the latter implies the immediate contact of the subject with the object of cognition, whereas the former excludes this, cf. *Util. Cred.* XI, 25), and also that knowledge necessarily implies belief (cf. *Sol*. I.III.8). Hoitenga's problem is easily resolved if one notes that this second assertion of Augustine's applies only to the first definition of faith given below.

[8] Augustine acknowledges that faith can also mean "trustworthiness" or a "pledge of trust" in Latin/Scripture, and normally brackets this meaning (cf. *Spir. et Litt.* 54).

[9] Eugene TeSelle, "Faith" in Alan Fitzgerald (ed.) *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1999). Despite Scholastic claims (cf. STIIaIIae2.2), this tripartite division is nowhere succinctly given by Augustine, although its individual elements are present in his writings. cf. Thomas Camelot,

propositional assent. Augustine succinctly defines faith in this way as "nothing else than to think with assent" (*De Praed. Sanct.* V). Faith *in Deum*, by contrast, means living out one's propositional Christian belief in acts of charity which unite one to God/Christ.[10] For Augustine, however, when considering its epistemological status, faith is primarily discussed with regard to its second meaning, that of propositional assent on the basis of an authority (*auctoritas*).

The key point here is that this kind of faith is contrasted with "understanding" (*intellectus*) by Augustine, and taken to be incompatible with knowledge (*scientia*/*sapientia*), which properly speaking consists of "what we understand with the mind's firm reasoning".[11] Frequently, given the parallel which he draws between these latter forms of knowledge and visual perception, Augustine makes a broader distinction between belief in propositions concerning immediate objects of perception (through the senses or the "mind's eye") and belief in propositions concerning objects which are not thus immediately perceived.[12] I now explain what Augustine means by the above epistemological terms, and his motivation for denying (against modern orthodoxy) that true belief on the basis of accurate testimony constitutes knowledge. As Ronald Nash notes,[13] Augustine divides human perception into three categories.[14] Firstly, there is corporeal vision, which is sense perception. Second lies spiritual vision: the ordered perception of physical objects which are not present. This can be done by remembering particular perceptions of physical objects, or by imagining new perceptions on the basis of previous ones. Intellectual vision, finally, is of objects inaccessible to sense perception. These include the self and its emotions, and immaterial entities such as God and the eternal ideas/*rationes* (akin to Platonic forms) [15] by which He created the world. *Scientia* and *sapientia*, which are species of *intellectus*, relate to these latter two levels of vision.[16] *Sapientia* is knowledge of God

---

"Credere Deum, Credere Deo, Credere in Deum", *Recherches de Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques* 30 (1941), 465-71.

[10] E.g. *En. Ps.* LXXVII.8, CXXX.1; *Jo.Ev. Tract.*LIII.10.

[11] *Retr.* 1.14.3, summarising *De Util.* XI.25, highlights "the difference between what is grasped by the mind's sure reasoning, which we calling knowing, and… [written or spoken testimony] beneficially passed on to our descendants…as something that must be believed". Cf. *De Lib. Arb.* II.6.

[12] *F Invis.*; *Ep.* 120.

[13] Nash, *Light of the Mind*, 9.

[14] *Trin.* XII.2.2.; *Gn. Litt.* XII.6.15.

[15] On Augustine's interpretation of which, cf. Gerald O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (London: Duckworth, 1987) 189-99.

[16] For the distinction, cf. *Trin.* XXII.14.22-6.

and His *rationes*, brought about via divine illumination. *Scientia*, meanwhile, is described by Nash as "the judgement of sense objects by rational and eternal standards".[17] This involves both the comparison of memories derived from sense-experience with one another, and perhaps also with the forms understood by *sapientia*.[18] In both its essential varieties, however, human knowledge depends upon immediate contact with the object of knowledge, or at least the memory of such contact, in a manner analogous to visual perception.[19] Either, one perceives an exterior object with the senses or by introspection/ illumination one finds the object "within oneself". Knowledge which pertains to the divine *rationes*, or their comparison with physical objects, constitutes *intellectus*. Indeed, Augustine sometimes suggests that simple sense-perception which does not involve such a comparison of physical objects with the divine ideas is not knowledge at all.[20] Even animals possess such cognition, yet are surely not party to "knowledge" proper.[21]

With a grasp of Augustine's distinction between "knowledge" and "belief", it may be useful to examine his theory of "divine illumination". This explains the acquisition of *sapientia* by humans, and plays an important role in his religious epistemology. "Illumination" has received various interpretations, the distinctions between which are largely unimportant to what follows. I confine myself, therefore, to outlining the problems which the theory is supposed to solve and giving some suggestion of how it seeks to do so. Gareth Matthews suggests that illumination is meant to explain two aspects of human knowledge. [22] In *De Magistro*, Augustine suggests that although it is clear that we often learn from human teachers by way of signs, it might seem as if such learning is purely a matter of coming to *believe* information on testimony. Yet this is false: I can hardly be said to trust my teacher concerning arithmetical truths, nor do parents have their children educated to merely gain beliefs rather than knowledge.[23] Since Augustine believes that knowledge is a matter of direct acquaintance with an object, this implies that the teacher somehow uses signs to bring his pupil into

[17] Nash, *Light of the Mind*, 9.
[18] *Trin.* XII.2-3; 25.
[19] *Util. Cred.* XI, 35; *Ep.* 145.3-4; 6-8.
[20] *Ord.* II.2.5: "to perceive by the senses is one thing, but to know [*scire*] is something else" (Quoted in Nash, *Light of the Mind*, 9).
[21] *Quant.* XXVI.50.
[22] Gareth Matthews, "Knowledge and Illumination" in Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 181.
[23] *Mag.* XIV.45.

contact with the taught subject matter. Yet there are two problems for such an account. Firstly, Augustine notes that ostentations are often vague, leaving unexplained the regularity with which pupils grasp precisely what is taught. [24] More fundamentally, since signs differ from their objects, a teacher cannot directly transfer conceptual content by means of signs such as words. The meaning of words is not (at least, when first comprehended) evident from their sound/spelling.[25] A teacher can at most use signs or words to gesture towards the intended item or truth, which the pupil must grasp with an act of immediate sensory/intellectual perception. This leaves mysterious, however, our ability to grasp concepts which cannot be gestured to physically (e.g. universals). Thus the second aspect of knowledge which divine illumination accounts for is the certain knowledge of unchanging truths- i.e. *rationes*- with which we lack physical contact. Augustine rejects claims that we can arrive at knowledge of *rationes* by abstraction. Particularly, as Nash notes,[26] Augustine claims that with regards to mathematical truths, we hold to their universal application in a way which would be irrational if they were merely arrived at by abstraction from the experience of material objects.[27] Similarly, he argues that all mathematical truths rest on the foundation supplied by the number "1" which is a concept of paradigmatic unity absent from composite material bodies.[28] Augustine further claims that ethical truths, which also have a universal application, are known by "contemplation" in the same manner by which we known mathematical truths.[29] Augustine is aware that Plato attempted to explain both of the problems illustrated above by claiming that humans *remember* what they have learnt by direct contact with the forms in a previous life, but despite ambiguous discussion in his early works, eventually clearly rejects this idea on the grounds that although the ability to learn e.g. mathematical truths is near universal, not all humans would have studied geometry in their previous life.[30] Augustine's own solution is to claim that Christ "illuminates" our minds by putting us into

[24] *Ibid.* X.29.
[25] *Ibid.* X.33-40.
[26] Nash, *Light of the* Mind, 78.
[27] *Lib. Arb.* II.8.20.
[28] *Lib. Arb.* II.8.22.
[29] *Lib. Arb.* II.10.28.
[30] *Trin.*XII.15.34. For Augustine's attitude to Plato's teaching, cf. O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, 199-207.

contact with the *rationes* which inhere in God's Word when teachers indicate them to us.[31] Hence, "Now He who is consulted and who is said to "dwell in the inner man", He it is who teaches us, namely, Christ…[i.e.] everlasting wisdom".[32]

There is disagreement as to how Augustine envisages this happening. Without wishing to endorse any particular account of divine illumination, it might be helpful to briefly note a few things about what illumination entails.[33] Firstly, against some attempts to reconcile Augustine's doctrine with Aristotelian epistemology, by asserting that on Augustine's model God operates the "agent intellect" in abstraction, it should be noted that Augustine provides illumination as an alternative to accounts of "abstraction". This does not mean, however, that Augustine attributes no "autonomy" to the human mind, and that illumination need involve some sort of occasionalism where God constantly intervenes to illumine subjects. Instead, as Schumacher notes, it is possible that God has implanted in the human mind the tendency to encounter *rationes*, such that this process of encounter constitutes an "intrinsic intellectual capacity".[34] Similarly, *pace* the debate around "ontologism" outlined by Nash, it is not entirely clear whether Augustine takes the *rationes* found "in" the human mind to be numerically identical with those in the divine intellect, such that Augustine takes human knowledge to involve unmediated cognition of the divine ideas (or God's essence itself).[35] Whatever the precise details, Augustine implies that due to illumination, the human mind contains *rationes* closely related to- if not identical with- the divine *rationes*, such that contact with the former is enough for knowledge of the latter.[36] This is consistent with our ability to grow in knowledge of the *rationes*, coming to see them

[31]E.g. *Mag.* XI.38, 40,46*; Sol*. I.12.
[32] *Mag.* XI.38.
[33] For an overview of accounts, cf. Lydia Schumacher, *Divine Illumination* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 7-13.
[34] Schumacher, *Divine Illumination*, 58-65.
[35] Nash, *Light of the Mind*, 102-124.
[36] If Augustine is interpreted in this way, does his theory still solve the problems it sets out to prove? I think that it probably does. Forms in the human mind, even if not strictly archetypes which are unchangeable *qua* eternal as are the divine reasons, might nevertheless be (i) unchanging insofar as they do not vary each time one perceives them and (ii) surpassing the imperfection of property instances in creatures, on both counts because they are perfect images of the divine reasons. Since the main problem he outlines with the theory of abstraction is that it must produce contingent knowledge and imperfect "forms", then Augustine does not seem committed to the idea that humans have knowledge of numerically the same forms as God does by his theory of illumination. Moreover, God can solve the problems about learning and interpersonal communication described in *De Magistro* by ensuring that the human mind associates the appropriate created forms when they are signified by the words or actions of other humans.

with increasing clarity as we are re-made into the image of God.[37] It is important to observe with Nash, however, that virtually all human knowledge (*scientia* in addition to *sapientia*), including knowledge relevant to belief, depends on divine illumination.[38] This asserted dependence on God for associating forms correctly with the material objects we encounter, so as to form correct beliefs, is similar to the reliance on divine providence for our knowledge suggested by Plantinga's "Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism".[39] Plantinga argues that only a process of evolution guided by God would be likely to ensure a reliable link between our physical interactions with objects (and resultant brain states), and our beliefs about them (which supervene on those states). Although Plantinga does not hold a theory of divine illumination, both thinkers suggest that God's design, creation and sustenance of our mental faculties is necessary to account for much human knowledge.

Faith, therefore, is contrasted with knowledge as "belief in things unseen". I now explain the rationale behind this distinction. Augustine has two principal reasons for restricting knowledge to things which are or have been directly present to the believer. The first is ethical. Augustine's philosophy is primarily concerned with knowledge of God and the soul.[40] In Augustine's view, which has deep roots in Platonism, the goal of philosophy is bound up with human happiness.[41] This is not to be found in sensory experience driven by a disordered desire for material objects/pleasures, but in the eternal, unmediated contemplation of Truth, (i.e. God) in the beatific vision. In other words, on Augustine's broadly Platonist epistemology, the quest for knowledge is an ethical venture driven by love for the object sought and consummated by act of immediate cognitive contact with it. Desire for contact with the sought object thus rules out ascribing the term "knowledge" to belief in propositions which is not based upon contact with their truth-makers.[42] The second motivation for Augustine's restrictive definition of knowledge comes closer to the concerns of modern epistemologists. Although

[37] Cf. Schumacher, *Divine Illumination*, 57.
[38] Nash, *Light of the Mind*, 92 *Ep.*120.10, where we are illumined as to "what we believe without knowing it, what we hold as objects of knowledge, what physical shape we recall, what one we imagine, what the sense-organ perceives, what the mind images…" (as quoted in Nash).
[39] Cf. Plantinga, *WPF* 216-237.
[40] *Sol.*I.2.7
[41] On this connection between Plato and Augustine, cf. Phillip Cary, *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul* (New York: OUP, 2008), 7-32.
[42] As noted above, Augustine's doctrine of illumination implies that we have something like immediate contact with non-religious truths we now know, such as mathematical truths.

Hoitenga claims that Augustine has nothing approaching a "justified true belief" account of knowledge,[43] I suspect that desire to ensure that beliefs are "internally" justified motivates Augustine's position. An illustrative passage in the *Confessions* describes how, motivated by sceptical concerns, Augustine was briefly reluctant to give assent to propositions with acts of faith in addition to those of knowledge: "I was hanging back from any assent…I longed to be as certain of those things I could not see as I was certain that seven and three make ten".[44] This quotation evinces an acute concern to be certain that one's beliefs appear to oneself to reflect the truth of things, which is the root of "internalism" about justification.

Although for the most part Augustine discusses "faith" as assent to propositions on the basis of authority as described above, Augustine can talk of faith "*in Deum*": that faithful and loving response to revelation which Scholastics term *fides formata*. As I further note below, some scholars stress the inseparability of faith and love in Augustine's epistemology. This is because for Augustine, knowledge is a matter of volitional seeking. As Schumacher writes, "the intellect only ever accumulates the knowledge that it desires to accumulate, or knowledge of what it truly loves".[45] Admittedly, as I have explained, faith differs from knowledge from Augustine. Yet as Ronald Cushman notes, faith has understanding as its goal,[46] and understanding cannot be reached *sans* faith. With Schumacher's claim in mind, this means that faith ought to be bound up with the love which motivates the quest for knowledge.[47] Moreover, Cushman notes that faith itself is bound up with the will to the extent that Augustine can describe it as a "motion of the heart",[48] which consists, in Cushman's words, of "the conversion of the will through the crumpling of pride". Indeed, Cushman

[43] Hoitenga, *Faith and Reason*, 61.
[44] *Conf.* VI.4.6.
[45] Schumacher, *Divine Illumination*, 42. This seems a reasonable summary of Augustine's thought in general. For example, he closely associates inordinate love for the physical world with the acquisition of scientific knowledge and a corresponding lack of genuine understanding about God and the soul. I do not know, however, quite how Augustine would explain an interest in acquiring, for example, knowledge of geometry. Perhaps one would acquire it via a general desire to know truth, or else via the love for knowledge of physical objects which one then contemplates the shape of.
[46] Ronald Cushman, "Faith and Reason" in Roy Battenhouse (ed.) *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*, (New York: OUP, 1955), 289.
[47] See the paragraph below. Cushman quotes *Trin* I.8.17, "For contemplation is the recompense of faith, for which recompense our hearts are purified by faith".
[48] Cushman, "Faith and Reason", 309. Cf. *Jo. Ev. Tract.* XXII.6.

goes so far as to assert that "the Church can be authority only to the heart that has become thankful".[49] However, whilst this analysis is congruent with the broad thrust of Augustine's thought, it is important to note that throughout his works, Augustine admitted the real possibility of "dead" faith existing in both demons[50] and humans.[51] Such faith is insufficient for justification, although in later works, Augustine perhaps gave a more independent role to faith in justification, and could describe it itself as a "good will".[52] Indeed, *Enchiridion* 8, which is sometimes cited to show the strong connection between the theological virtues on Augustine's account, ends with a statement of the logical relations between faith, hope and love. Augustine implies that faith is a prerequisite for the other virtues, but not vice-versa.

Thus far, we have seen that although belief is opposed and inferior to knowledge, Augustine nevertheless endorses belief as rationally permissible. I now elucidate more precisely the organic relationship of belief in propositions based on authority and knowledge of them by "sight". When discussing the relationship between faith and understanding, Augustine often quotes a formula from the LXX (mis)translation of Isaiah 7.9: "unless you believe, you shall not understand".[53] This formula implies the temporal priority of faith over understanding. Why, however, does Augustine regard faith as essential to understanding? As Hoitenga observes, Augustine himself recognises that there are some propositions essential to Christian belief which shall never be known, including historical events such as the resurrection of Christ, which we can never witness for ourselves.[54] Indeed, there are other propositions, such as simple mathematical truths, which are apparently understood as soon as they are believed.

Crucial to Augustine's position on the relationship between faith and understanding is his underlying belief that humans are prevented by sinful pride from recognising our true cognitive situation.[55] As

[49] Cushman, "Faith and Reason", 297.
[50] *Ep. Jo.* 10.1; *Ep.*194.1.
[51] *Grat. et Lib. Arb.* 18, *Nat. et Gr.* 82, *Trin* XV.18.
[52] *C. Ep. Pel*. I.3.7.
[53] Augustine quotes this passage very frequently- e.g. *Trin* XV.II.2; *Ep*. 120.I.3; *Mag.* XI.37; *Lib. Arb.* II.II.6.
[54] Hoitenga, *Faith and Reason*, 67; *Div. Qu.* 48.
[55] I cite references from Augustine's particularly clear discussion in *Trin.* IV. For similar themes, cf. *Sol*. I.I.3; 6.12. *Vera Rel.* VII.13.

John Burnaby argues,[56] much of Augustine's analysis of the latter is drawn from the works of Platonists whom he had read at Milan before conversion to Christianity, although Augustine eventually came to see the Platonist project of assent without faith as impractical, proud and according insufficient importance to our embodied nature.[57] In Augustine's view, whilst we congratulate ourselves on our understanding of the physical world, we are frequently ignorant concerning the nature of God and the soul, and even therefore the forms and purposes of creation constituted by the divine *rationes*.[58] The cause of this ignorance is not, as in Plantinga's theological anthropology, damage done to some cognitive faculty. Rather, our ignorance stems from the fact that we do not desire to turn our attention inwards to be illumined by God and to grasp *rationes* rather than physical objects themselves. This is the consequence of a disordered desire for sensory pleasure, which has crept in after the fall, and humans pride in our cognitive achievements, which leads us to prize what is now termed "scientific" knowledge over philosophy.[59] Yet Augustine, hopes that faith can transform our cognitive situation by leading us back to Christ, the teacher within.[60] The suggestion is that the lengths to which God was prepared to go to reconcile the world to Himself in the Incarnation show both the extent of our depravity, and the boundless gratuity of divine love. Augustine summarises: "First we had to be persuaded how much God loves us, in case out of sheer desperation we lacked the courage to reach up to Him. Also, we had to be shown what sort of people we are that he loves, in case we should take pride in our own worth".[61] This should lead to our repentance, reception of the sacraments,[62] and the mending of our sinful habits through grace. This process should in turn yield a purification of the will enabling us to look "inwards" to Christ the

[56] John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), 25-9.
[57] *Trin*. IV.4.21-2.
[58] This should not, however, be taken to imply that non-Christians only have *scientia* to the exclusion of knowledge of the divine reasons, which Gioia seems to assert. Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 44-5 writes that for Augustine the knowledge of philosophers "does not count as *real* knowledge". He further comments, "Philosophers have indeed been right to argue that all temporal realities have been made according to 'eternal ideas' (*aeternae rationes*), but this does not mean that they were able to know *in* these ideas."
[59] *Trin.* IV.24.
[60] For an extended explanation, cf. Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 168-72; Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 83ff.
[61] *Trin.* IV.1.
[62] *Ord.* II.V.15-16.

teacher, who will illumine us. Once faith is embraced, "a way of life agreeable to the commandments will purge the mind and make it fit to perceive spiritual things".[63]

3.0 Augustine and Reformed Epistemology

Having outlined some of the terminology and processes important for Augustine's religious epistemology, I now move to compare his approach to Reformed Epistemology. I suggest that like CRE, Augustine's thought tends toward the rejection of evidentialism, alongside a strong emphasis on the gracious nature of faith. I further argue that Augustine allows a role for a free choice to believe (particularly in his earlier work), and that there is some suggestion that Augustine might have endorsed the negative internalist condition I have placed upon epistemic justification.

3.1 Scepticism as the Road to Faith

I start by suggesting a parallel in the development of Reformed Epistemology and Augustine's own thoughts on faith and reason. Both Augustine and Reformed Epistemologists use scepticism as a spring-board to demonstrating the rationality of belief. In *Confessions* Books V-VI, Augustine describes how after coming to disbelieve the claims of his Manichean teachers, who had promised to demonstrate religious truths to Augustine rather than have him accept them on faith, he despaired of discovering wisdom and happiness. Augustine was drawn to Academic scepticism, which he encountered indirectly through Cicero's *Academicans* and *Hortensius*. This position, as reconstructed by Augustine, is an acute form of scepticism. Unlike Pyrrhonist sceptics such as Sextus Empiricus, Academics were concerned not merely to maintain uncertainty about our knowledge of various truths, but rather to maintain that humans certainly lack knowledge of any truth whatsoever. Such scepticism was based on a definition of the perception of truth (i.e. knowledge) taken from Zeno the Stoic: "that truth could be perceived, which was so impressed on the mind from the source of its origin that it could not originate from whence it did not originate".[64] Although Academics recognised that absolute suspense of judgement (*epoche*) was impractical for everyday living, they maintained that one could act according to what was most probable and make judgements which resembled perception and claim

[63] *Vera Rel*. VII.13.
[64] *C. Adam*. II.V.11.

close to the truth. The Academic position, which under the influence of Christian Platonism Augustine soon relinquished, was an important spur which drove Augustine back to the Christian position that faith is epistemically valuable and soteriologically indispensable. As John Rist notes, Augustine's rejection of scepticism gave rise to two important thoughts for his eventual attitude to faith. [65] Firstly, Augustine was convinced that truth could be known, and that one could therefore hope for further knowledge. On the other hand, Augustine retained some of the sceptical conclusions which had originally driven him to distain faith. This would have important consequences for how Augustine saw faith and its epistemic status.

It may be helpful to briefly recount the arguments with which Augustine attempts to rebut Academic scepticism.[66] Firstly, he suggests that it is foolish of the Academics to claim that their position secures "wisdom", because "wisdom" implies knowledge, which the Academics claim to lack.[67] Moreover, the Academic position is self-undermining. For how can one claim to know what is probable or "close to the [known] truth" if one is entirely unfamiliar with what *is* known to be true? [68] Indeed, in accepting Zeno's definition of perceived/known truth above, the Academics claim to know something. Further, Augustine claims that some propositions can be known even on the Academic criterion for knowledge, such as logical and mathematical truths (e.g. the truth of simple additions, and of the law of the excluded middle). [69] Augustine is aware that none of these arguments answer scepticism concerning our knowledge of the external world. Is it not possible that we are merely dreaming what we take ourselves to perceive through our senses? Here Augustine claims that there are truths that we can know about our perceptions even in this scenario, including facts about what appears to be the case to us- even if appearances are deceptive- and necessary truths about these appearances: facts both about the appearances themselves, and about the states of affairs they point

[65] John Rist, "Faith and Reason", in Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 29.
[66] For a broadly negative assessment of Augustine's arguments, cf. Christopher Kirwan, *Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1991), 15-34.
[67] *C. Adam*. I. II-IX.
[68] *C. Adam*. II. Ch.VII-XII.
[69] *C. Adam* III.X.23.

towards.[70] However, Augustine does not attempt to argue that sense perception actually yields knowledge of the external world. Rather, as illustrated below, Augustine would perhaps have held that belief in the deliverances of sense-perception is, like testimonial belief, justified by our universal engagement in it and its practical value. Because of Augustine's positive attitude towards belief, he is happy to grant that it is not entirely inappropriate to say that we "know" through testimony[71]- indeed, even Scripture can accommodate itself to this way of speaking although, this is to use the term loosely. [72]

To summarise, we can see that in a manner similar to the way in which the Reformed Epistemologists rejected classical foundationalism as self-undermining, so Augustine rejected a contemporary position placing restrictions on what one could know. Like Reformed Epistemologists, this led him to countenance the idea that one could hold a wide variety of justified beliefs. This is because, having conceded that one can only know a small range of propositions with certainty, he nevertheless realises that potentially erroneous belief by testimony (derived from the senses or human testifiers) is a matter of practical necessity (cf. below).

3.2: Augustine the Evidentialist?

3.2.1: Augustine's Appeal to Evidence and Reason as Prior to Faith

Having explored one parallel between Augustine's thought and Reformed Epistemology, I now consider whether like Reformed Epistemologists, Augustine rejected evidentialism. [73] I argued above that faith should precede understanding for Augustine. This might suggest that, like Reformed Epistemologists, Augustine is happy for religious beliefs or doxastic practices to be held as basic. Yet there are several ways in which Augustine asserts that understanding precedes faith, one of which has been used to argue that Augustine is an evidentialist. For a start, as Hoitenga notes, Augustine

[70] *C. Adam* III.11.25.
[71] *Trin.* XV, 12.
[72] *Ep.* 147,12.
[73] As I understand "evidentialism" here, it is the position that in order to rationally believe in a proposition, one must have *some* evidence (of a sort acceptable to classical foundationalists) for the proposition's truth.

observes that one can only have faith in propositions which one understands.[74] The understanding of propositions suitable for belief may not itself involve *sapientia*, if the *rationes* are not themselves propositional in form. However, the function of the memory in abstracting and combining mental images (i.e. "imagination"), surely necessary to the formation of propositions, falls under Augustine's category of *scientia*. Like all *scientia*, this mental function is dependent on *sapientia*, since if it is going to result in the marshalling of mental images appropriate for the understanding of a proposition conveyed by another, it will need to be guided by a grasp of the relevant properties to be selected for combination into a mental image/proposition.[75] Moreover, Augustine elsewhere claims that one ought to be convinced by reason of the need for belief in propositions upon the testimony of competent authorities. [76] Such an understanding of the necessity of faith may involve *sapientia*, but is at any rate presumably something that can be gained without reliance upon any other humans, and thus like *sapientia* prescinds from any faith in human authority.

Most importantly for the question of his evidentialism, Augustine seems to make the process of discernment as to whether an authority is to be believed a matter to be decided upon by "reason" grounded it items of knowledge rather than belief. Kretzmann quotes from *De vera religione* XXIV.45: "Authority demands faith, and prepares a person for reason. Reason leads to understanding and knowledge. Reason does not entirely desert authority, however, when we consider who is to be believed".[77] Augustine demonstrates how reason might decide upon this matter -which we have a "duty to consider"- [78] in the following chapters of *Vera. Rel.* He first explains that reason shows that a religious authority teaching monotheism is *prima facie* more credible than an authority teaching polytheism. There are philosophical reasons for belief in monotheism, and even polytheists often admit that there is one divine governor.[79] Augustine further contends that where there is disagreement

[74] Hoitenga, *Faith and Reason*, 69. Cf. *Serm. XLIII* vii, 9.
[75] For a discussion of the role of the imagination in producing mental images/propositions which can be assented to by faith, and the necessary accompaniment of *sapientia*, cf. *Trin.* VIII.
[76] *Ep.* 102.3.
[77] Translation from Kretzmann, "Faith Seeks", 6. Cf. *Praed. Sanct.* II.5: "For who doesn't see that thinking comes before believing? Indeed, no one believes anything, unless he has first thought that it is to be believed". (My trans.) ("*Quis enim non videat, prius esse cogitare quam credere? Nullus quippe credit aliquid, nisi prius cogitaverit esse credendum*" PL44/Aug X; Col. 961).
[78] *Vera. Rel.* XXV.46.
[79] *Ibid*.

between monotheistic cults, preference is to be given to those accompanied by miracles and mass conversions. As, Pojman notes, this appeal to the evidence of miracles and the miraculous growth of the Church recurs in many passages where Augustine discusses the rationality of faith.[80] Thus, in *De Fide in Rerum Invisibiliium* 5, Augustine claims that "those people who allege that our faith in Christ lacks any proof are greatly mistaken." In subsequent chapters, Augustine appeals to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies about Christ's life, the Church's growth,[81] and the Jewish diaspora,[82] before highlighting the quasi-miraculous spread of the gospel by the preaching of illiterate apostles.[83] This strategy is mirrored in *De Utilitate Credendi* 34, where having argued that it is acceptable to seek religious truth by means of authorities, Augustine appeals to miracles and the growth of the Church as demonstrating that her authority has received divine guarantee. He comments: "But, putting aside… reasoning [which, though it struggles to discern religious truth, gives hope that God has established some inspired religious authority]…this influences us in two ways, in part by the miracles, and in part because of its wide acceptance".[84] Thus, God's Providential work achieved "through prophets …the teaching of Christ…the journeys of apostles…the death of martyrs… [and] through miracles befitting such great deeds" should convince an enquirer to prefer the authority of the Church to other sects.[85] Likewise in *Ep*. 137.14-18, when Augustine discusses the objection that Christ performed miracles of insufficient splendour to demonstrate his unique relationship with God, he appeals to the moral and intellectual power of simple Christian teaching alongside prophecy and Church growth as abundant evidence of the Church's authority. Given his tendency to appeal to publicly available evidence when defending the rationality of faith, and in light of *Vera Rel*. XXIV, several commentators assume that despite his insistence on the temporal priority of faith over understanding, Augustine is an evidentialist.

[80] Pojman *Religious Belief and the Will,* 24.
[81] *F. Invis*. 3-5.
[82] *Ibid*. 6.
[83] *Ibid*. 7.
[84] *Util. Cred.* XVI.34.
[85] *Ibid*. XVII.35.

3.2.2 Augustine on Faith's Certainty and Rational Tenacity

There are, however, reasons to be cautious in asserting that Augustine holds to an evidentialist model of faith. I now examine one set of reasons to doubt this, viz. that Augustine does not seek to proportion his credence in truths of faith to the strength of the evidence for Christianity.

Firstly, even if Augustine demands *some* evidence regarding the trustworthiness of an authority for trusting the authority to be reasonable, he does not suggest that a believer perfectly proportions his credence to this evidence. For example, in *F. Invis* 3 Augustine points out that with regard to friendship, which involves trust in the good will of another,[86] we regularly place more trust in our friend's love for us than the evidence we have warrants, not least because events which prove the test of a friendship are often traumatic. Augustine's general attitude to belief appears optimistic, weighing the attainment of truth and the joy which it can bring as more important than the misfortune of deception. An evidentialist reading of Augustine should concede that Augustine believes that the potential spiritual benefits of Catholic faith render the balance of evidence required to produce firm belief lower than that required by a Cliffordian proportioning of credence to evidence.

Furthermore, as Lamont observes, Augustine accords a very high degree of certainty to propositions believed with Christian faith.[87] By this, Lamont means that Augustine affords these propositions a high degree of "rational tenacity"- i.e. he holds that it will take strong defeaters to make belief in them unreasonable, and he probably also holds that they should be held with a high level of credence.[88] I argued above that such rational tenacity is incompatible with an evidentialist approach to faith, and that giving such high levels of credence to propositions believed by faith is difficult for the

[86] Our friend's charity, as Augustine notes is both beyond our knowledge and can be simulated.
[87] Lamont, *Divine Faith*, 42.
[88] Does Augustine also think that the propositions of faith ought rationally to be believed with a high level of credence? I am not certain whether Augustine would have thought of the matter in this way. To my knowledge, he simply talks of believing or doubting propositions, rather than affording them some particular probability. Whilst he writes against the Academic position of affording only the judgement of "probability" to particular beliefs, this is consistent with a position like that of Newman in his *Grammar*, where assent is seen as an all-or-nothing affair to be essentially contrasted with a judgement that some proposition is (merely) probable. This seems to be how twelfth-century Augustinians think of the matter- cf. Hugh of St. Victor *De Sacramentis* I.X.II. If, however, Augustine were to think in terms of levels of credence (perhaps this is how he thinks of our trust in friends in *De Fid. Rer. Inv*. and would explain his insistence throughout *Ep. 147* that Scripture is to be believed more firmly or readily than human authorities) I suspect that he would afford a very high degree to the claims of Christianity, on the grounds that this is likely necessary for the encouragement of love for Christ which itself engenders the moral and epistemic virtue of humility.

evidentialist. In *Ep.* 147.4, Augustine puts the level of certainty (i.e. credence?) to be accorded to propositions taught by Scripture on a par with matters which are known by sense perception or grasped by "mental vision". Such propositions must be "unreservedly believed". Similarly, at the end of *Contra Academicos,* Augustine affirms that the propositions be believes with faith have very considerable rational tenacity: "I, however, am resolved in nothing whatsoever to depart from the authority of Christ".[89] Hoitenga also quotes *De Civitate Dei* XI.1, which seems to show Augustine according the teachings of Scripture greater certainty than other texts: "The expression 'City of God' which I have been using is justified by that Scripture whose divine authority puts it above the literature of all other people and brings under its sway every type of human genius". [90] Yet Augustine admits that human testimony is generally unreliable and that its deliverances can reasonably be doubted.[91] This would apparently make it difficult for his strong certainty in the contents of Scripture to be grounded in broader human testimony. Accordingly, Hoitenga suggests that for Augustine, although faith is begun on the basis of evidence for the Church's reliability, it ultimately gains greater certainty grounded in divine illumination. [92]

Yet few commentators notice that Augustine is not entirely consistent in affirming the perfect rational tenacity of faith. When debating Manichean opponents, Augustine concedes that strong evidence in favour of the Manichean position should undermine his faith: "Now if the truth is so clearly proved as to leave no possibility of doubt, it must be set before all the things that keep me in the Catholic Church".[93] Against Hoitenga, this implies that evidential concerns continue to play a role in sustaining the rationality of faith after its inception, at least insofar as defeaters for Christianity may require rebuttal to blunt their epistemic force. Further, Augustine offers a rebuttal of Manichean claims that the Catholic Scriptures have been corrupted in *De Utilitate Credendi*. This suggests that Augustine thinks it worthwhile to refute *some* objections to Christianity in demonstrating the rationality of faith, and perhaps that rational belief depends upon such a refutation. One might allege that Augustine was

[89] *C. Adam*. III.XX.43; quoted in Hoitenga, *Faith and Reason*, 141.
[90] Hoitenga, *Faith and Reason*, 141.
[91] Cf. *Civ. Dei* XI, I; *Ep.* 147.4.
[92] Hoitenga *Faith and Reason*, 141-2.
[93] *C. Ep. Man.* IV.

merely rhetorically adapting himself to the exigencies of debate, by conceding that he might be persuaded out of his belief and therefore rebutting his opponents' arguments. Equally, it is possible to debate a position on the basis of publicly available evidence whilst maintaining that one has privileged access to evidence which assures rational tenacity in one's position. Such a debating strategy is practiced by some modern Christian philosophers such as William Lane Craig and Plantinga himself, who claim both that belief in the existence of God is properly basic, and supported by evidence. Thus, the above passage does not decisively show that Augustine admitted that faith lacks perfect rational tenacity in the face of defeaters.

On the other hand, there are occasional implications that, like Plantinga, Augustine thinks that faith is rationally tenacious because the warrant possessed by Christian beliefs means that Christians have an "intrinsic defeater-defeater" for such criticisms.[94] At the start of *Contra Faustum*, Augustine writes of "semi-Christians" (those under-educated about their faith) that "though they are unable to reply to the capacious statements of your objections because of what is lacking to their faith, they still know that they should not follow you, but shun you". Rather than stating that the purpose of his book is to remove rational obstacles to faith, he claims to write in order "that Christians may learn something from your refutation, and that the less advanced may learn to avoid you."[95] Presumably, the less advanced are to reject Manicheanism by understanding that it is opposed to Christianity, even if they cannot fully follow Augustine's arguments. Taken together, these statements imply that prior to comprehending a sound rebuttal of Manichean claims those who are aware that Faustus is opposing the Catholic faith can be confident that his teaching is false. Since they cannot have any ordinary defeater for Faustus' beliefs, therefore, I suggest that we read Augustine as stating that the strength of their faith itself gives them a defeater for Faustus' defeaters for Christianity. Yet Augustine does not make clear whether the strength of faith is rationally grounded in strong evidence for the Church's authority, or if strong Christian faith can be held as basic. Again, in commencing *Contra Epistulam Manichaei*, Augustine compares the changeable evaluation of philosophical arguments with the faith

[94] Plantinga's preferred term for a belief which one holds so strongly that the very strength with which it is held serves to render evidence against it insignificant.
[95] *C. Faustum* I.3.

of simple Catholics who are made "completely secure" by the simplicity of their faith.[96] The implication here seems to be that such is the level of justification which their faith possesses that the emergence of new defeaters for Christianity will likely not affect their levels of credence. The degree of rational tenacity which Augustine sometimes suggests as normative for Christian belief is extremely high, however. Accordingly his best strategy for explaining how faith can function as an "intrinsic defeater-defeater" might be to argue that belief in Church teaching is something like a fundamental doxastic practice for believers, rather than that the motives of credibility are so persuasive as to render even the faith of simple Christians extremely certain and rationally tenacious.

Perhaps, however, a better-rounded picture of Augustine's thoughts on the matter of the rational tenacity of faith might is reflected in *Ep.* 102, where he replies to objections to Christianity from an enquiring friend. Having answered the objections, Augustine argues that whilst it is permissible to have basic difficulties with Christian faith met before starting to believe (e.g. why Christ took so long to appear), it is unreasonable to heap up questions before making a commitment to faith.[97] These difficulties may still be piously examined when one has come to faith, but one should accept that they may not be soluble. This position is congruent with that of *Util. Cred.* VI.13, where it is suggested that embracing faith and love for the authors of Scripture is necessary in to sympathetically listen to refutations of Manichean difficulties with Scripture. Augustine holds this position because the time we have to decide on the important matter of religious belief is limited, and since our cognitive resources are improved by the situation of faith.

What are we to make, then, of Augustine's views on the relationship between the certainty and rational tenacity of Christian faith and its grounding in evidence? I suggest that whilst Augustine's avowal of certainty regarding Christian faith does not necessarily mean that there is to be no weighing of evidence pertinent to its credibility, his account is also at least consistent with -if not best supported by- the "Reformed" view that the warrant of basic Christian belief appropriately gives it such a high degree of credence that it is able to overcome many objections intrinsically.

[96] *C. Ep. Man.* 4.
[97] *Ep.* 102.38.

3.2.3 Augustine on Belief without Evidence

I now present a stronger objection to the evidentialist reading of Augustine- that he does not always require evidence for the trustworthiness of an authority for belief to be rational. At least, Augustine also thinks of non-rational motives as appropriately conducive to belief.[98] In *Confessions* X.3.3., for example, Augustine notes that his audience have no means of verifying the account of his life, and makes no mention of evidence for his trustworthiness. Rather, readers are expected to accept Augustine's testimony on the basis of "charity", which is based on the mutual love Augustine and readers have for God. Again, when explaining his motives for belief in *Contra Epistulam Manichaei* IV, Augustine refers to the Church's "authority, inaugurated by miracles, nourished by hope, enlarged by love, established by age". Whilst it is possible to read this passage as another instance of Augustine pointing to evidence that the Church teaches reliably, the reference to hope and love perhaps suggests that it is not merely a cognitive attraction to the authority of the Church which undergirds his faith. This reading might be confirmed by noting that Augustine goes on to talk of the "agreement of peoples and nations" and Catholicity of the Church as a reason to accept her teaching.[99] One explanation of Augustine's appeal to the age and catholicity of the Church's teaching is that he thinks that arguments/documents accepted by many people are likely to contain the truth. However, it is also possible that Augustine is here appealing not so much to the head as to the heart of his audience, by presenting the Church as an institution in line with the preference for traditional religion in the Ancient world, and by contrast evoking a common suspicion of localised cults at variance with more widespread religious practice. Indeed, when Augustine is discussing testimony as to the identity of one's parents, where one might hope to have some evidence of the credibility of the relevant authorities, Augustine rather casts doubt on this evidence and appeals to the ethical imperative of loving one's parents rather than any such evidence to ground the rationality of belief.[100]

---

[98] For a similar argument, cf. Peter King and Nathan Ballantyne, "Augustine on Testimony", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 29 (2) (2009), 195-214, who argue that Augustine anticipates a Reidian, non-reductive view of testimony, according to which testimonially-based knowledge need not be grounded in evidence for the testifier's reliability, and on which "any assertion is worthy of our trust until shown otherwise" (207-213).
[99] Cf. *Util. Cred.* XIV.31 for a similar argument that the Church should be taken more seriously as a locus of revelation than the Manichees who are "so few, so confused and so new".
[100] *Util. Cred.* 26.

As MacDonald observes, it would be somewhat strange of Augustine to require evidence in order to trust some particular vehicle of divine revelation.[101] This is because Augustine's whole system of knowledge depends on authority.[102] In outlining Augustine's doctrine of illumination above, I suggested that all human *scientia* depends on the influence of Christ the teacher. Christ, through sustaining and restoring the innate tendencies of the human mind which he has designed, enables an accurate perception of the divine *rationes*. He likewise enables their perception in relation to appropriate signs given by other creatures, making learning possible. Yet as MacDonald suggests,[103] this in fact, means that for one who believes in the doctrine of divine illumination, confidence in all learning is dependent on the trust that Christ really is assuring that the processes of *scientia* and *sapientia* are truth-directed.[104] Indeed, there is a more direct connection to religious belief than MacDonald notices. For as Augustine notes in *Util. Cred.* XVI.34, the search for a reliable religious authority is undergirded by the belief that God exists and exercises divine providence. Augustine claims that one can know this by reflection on the beauty of creation and also by consulting "some, I know not what, inner conscience".[105] As Mary Clark has suggested, conscience is closely related to divine illumination on Augustine's account- perhaps it is even a species of the latter.[106] This means that more specifically, the very search for a religious authority which prompts Augustine's appeals to the "evidence" of miracles for the Church's authority is itself based on accepting the trustworthiness of a testifier in a "basic" way. In light of this, it is difficult to claim that Augustine should, by his own intellectual standards, assert that evidence of the reliability of an authority must be perceived before that authority can rationally be credited.

---

[101] MacDonald, "The Epistemology of Faith", 176.
[102] Or perhaps better, trust in another person to pass on knowledge reliably. Normally "belief" in an authority cannot directly yield knowledge on Augustine's account, whereas trust in a teacher can, so I use the term "authority" cautiously here.
[103] *Ibid.*
[104] Since one can imagine that God is deceiving oneself by failing to properly associate words with their relevant forms, or by presenting forms that are somehow radically imperfect.
[105] Perhaps this is how Augustine retained belief in God and providence before his return to Christianity- cf. *Conf.* VI.5.8.
[106] Mary Clark, "Augustine on Conscience" in Elizabeth Livingstone (ed) *Studia Patristica* XXXII (Leuven, Peeters, 1995), 64 cites *Trin.* XIV.4.21 as evidence of Augustine's appeal to knowledge of moral principles- which he regards as universal- by way of divine illumination, and also *De sermone in monte* II.9.32, where he makes it clear that the gentiles know a law within their hearts by "the very light of truth". Clark further notes that for Augustine, conscience can mean both this general knowledge of moral principles, which came to be called *synderesis* by the Scholastics, in addition to an interior voice of self-examination (cf. *Conf.* VII.7.29).

Moreover, when arguing against external world scepticism, Augustine fails to present reason to think that we are not dreaming or otherwise deceived in our perceptions, merely asserting that regardless of their veracity, there are true facts about them.[107] That Augustine does not explore the matter further, might in part be due to the fact that he is mainly concerned with proving against the Academics that *some* truths can be known. Yet perhaps Augustine felt also little need to justify sense-perception given the near-universal human affection for engaging in it. In any case, Augustine's "basic" commitment to the practice of sense-perception should mean that he has reason to accept Plantinga's argument that if secular beliefs or practices can rationally be held to or engaged in a "basic" manner, perhaps religious beliefs and practices also be properly basic.

In short, therefore, whilst Augustine might appeal to evidence to justify believing in the Church or Scriptures as authorities, this should not be necessary given his wider epistemic standards. Indeed, if my interpretation of Augustine's appeal to the age and universality of the Church's teaching is correct, then "evidence" is not even necessary on Augustine's account to justify trusting one authority over another. Rather, it is primarily affective motives for belief- particularly, moral desires or *caritas*- that generally justifies the practice of trust in authorities.[108] This is also, I think, true in the case of specifically religious beliefs. In *Util. Cred.* 14, for example, Augustine asserts the importance of religion- it is undertaken "for the sake of the soul", in the hope that it will discover the truth and some eternal reward or happiness. In *Util.Cred.* 27, moreover, Augustine argues that it is even more important that humans find guidance in religious matters than other areas, because of their "greater sacredness and excellence". Likewise, when discussing what can make life truly happy (i.e. both fulfilling and ethical), Augustine writes, "for this reason the faith by which we believe in God is particularly necessary".[109] Indeed, Augustine's own faith journey in *Confessions* is dominated by his quest for religious truth as a guide to happiness. Note that this importance of practical motives for belief seems to hold even in cases where, as with following one's conscience in believing God, one's

[107] Cf. Dutton, *Augustine and Academic Scepticism*, 227.
[108] When discussing the broad necessity of faith in the testimony of others, Augustine universally insists on the importance of beliefs for practical and ethical purposes, and in particular the virtue of charity. Cf. *Util. Cred*.26, *F. Invis.*2-5, *Lib. Arb*, *Ep.147*.5, *Conf.* VI.5 offers a summary: "unless we did believe [various matters], we should be unable to do anything in this life".
[109] *Trin* XIII.3.

belief that one will achieve a practical or ethical good by faith is only warranted (i.e. properly and reliably truth-directed) if one's faith is true, and where one might stand only to achieve the practical goal if what one chooses to believe is true. Might this mean, that like some contemporary philosophers, Augustine thinks that faith is reasonable (or, that it can rationally enjoy certainty greater than its evidential support strictly warrants) simply because of an evaluation of the goods to be gained by believing? Augustine might well have been sympathetic to arguments for Christianity in this vein, and could even suggest to his congregation that, "[I]f I were to ask you why you believe in Christ, why you became Christians, every single one of you [would answer] me truthfully: 'For the sake of the blessed life.'"[110] However, I shall suggest below that on Augustine's account, faith may have considerable justification and warrant even absent practical motives for belief.

3.2.4 Grace, the Will and Evidentialism

It is not merely the case, however, that there is reason to think that it is not *necessary* on Augustine's account for Christian faith to be rationally grounded in "motives of credibility". I now present reasons to think that Augustine should *reject* such an evidentialist position, which are connected to Augustine's theory of the cognitive limitations of fallen humanity and the necessity of grace for removing them.

Firstly, one might note that on Augustine's account, even if faith and charity are separable, Augustine seems to regard faith as an important staging post on the road towards obtaining charity, and after charity, *sapientia* (since only the soul which has been purged of its pride and inordinate love for material objects can without great difficulty focus on the immaterial and unchangeable forms present in the memory). This is because the Spirit infuses charity into those who, having come to faith, petition God for help.[111] Augustine places faith at the bottom rung of a ladder of purification with the help of God's grace, which will eventually lead to immediate contemplation of God in the beatific vision. Yet by Augustine's own account from at least the writing of *Ad Simplicianum* in 396, he became increasingly anxious to safeguard the priority of divine grace and election *ante praevisa*

[110] *Serm.* 150.4.
[111] E.g. *Spir. et Litt.* XXIX.51.

merita.[112] This tendency was considerably exacerbated by the emergence of Pelagius and the latter's insistence that Augustine's early works against the Manicheans supported his own position. It is not surprising, therefore, that Augustine is anxious to stress against Pelagius that faith, which gives rise to repentance and the petitioning of God for grace, is itself an unmerited divine gift. Yet in order for Augustine to defend himself from the Pelagians, it is problematic for him to allow that one can come to faith on the basis of evaluating evidence, since this seems to be an activity of which fallen humans are capable without grace. As Augustine himself notes, even Pelagius allowed for the necessity of grace which consists of our endowment with free will by God and his subsequent enlightenment as to how to behave properly, so to hold that the act faith is "gracious" merely since God presents evidence for the Church's authority which can be naturally evaluated by humans would be Pelagian.[113]

As MacDonald observes, Augustine's anti-Pelagian works therefore stress that not all people come to faith when presented with miracles or preaching.[114] Rather, Augustine attributes the disparity of reaction to God's grace, distributed through his unfathomable wisdom. Importantly for the question of Augustine's "evidentialism", in works following *De Gratia Christi* (318), Augustine argues that *exterior* teaching (i.e. miracles, signs, etc.) is insufficient to produce faith, which can only be gained by inner instruction: converts "hear of the Father within, and learn".[115] This takes place by God "opening the door" of human understanding, so that God produces an "inclination" of the heart to believe in a "marvellous and ineffable way".[116] The language of "internal" teaching obviously recalls Augustine's doctrine of divine illumination, as Augustine makes clear. In *Jo. Ev. Tract.* III.13, for example, Augustine argues that without the internal teaching of Christ and "anointing" of the Spirit, no one can learn anything about faith from preaching. Recapitulating the argument of *De Magistro*, he comments: "[Human teachers] can offer a suggestion by the sound of our voice, but if he who teaches isn't within, our voice is of no avail…Teachings and admonitions that come from without are of some

[112] *Praed. Sanct.* IV.8; *Persev*. XX.52.
[113] E.g. *Spir. et Litt.*, 14, *Nat. et Gr.* 12.
[114] E.g. *Gr. Et Pecc. Or.* 10.11. Augustine had already made the same observation in *Simpl.* 13-4.
[115] *Praed. Sanct.* 8.1.5 "they who believe at the voice of the preacher from without, hear of the Father from within, and learn; while they who do not believe, hear outwardly, but inwardly do not hear nor learn".
[116] *Praed. Sanct*. 41-42.

help. He who teaches hearts has his chair in heaven.".[117] However, unlike the previous doctrine of illumination, God's light helps converts not merely to understand the concepts conveyed by preachers, by also to embrace them: "A human being hears someone speaking, either another human being or an angel, but [one is illuminated] in order that one might see and know that what is said is true".[118]

So also, as Gerald O'Collins notes,[119] Augustine can talk of the risen Christ as an object of inner vision for Christians (perhaps, analogous to the perception of *rationes*): "[W]e didn't see him either hanging on the cross, nor observe him rising from the tomb. We hold on to all of this by faith, we behold it with the eyes of the heart."[120] Being thus persuaded of the gospel's truth is also strongly linked to the infusion of charity by the Holy Spirit. Such love is "the light of the heart"[121], and the "anointing" of the Spirit is the infusion of love.[122] Thus, as Augustine stressed even in earlier anti-Pelagian works,[123] it is *delight* in the gospel message which ultimately fosters faith.[124] As Phillip Cary notes,[125] this recalls the erotic delight in knowledge of the Forms which is said to fuel their contemplation in Platonist epistemology.[126] The emphasis on the necessity of inner teaching or illumination is repeated throughout Augustine's later works, in which Augustine often uses Paul's example of God "giving the growth" to the seeds of faith planted and watered by apostles (1 Corinthians 3:7) to show that it is "internal" grace which ultimately explains conversion.[127]

What, however, is the nature of such inner divine testimony and its connection to evidence? One might allege that even if Augustine cannot endorse the position that one can come to faith *merely* by evaluating the relevant evidence, he could still maintain that this is an essential part of rationally coming to faith. One way of elucidating this position would be to note that for Augustine, the role of

---

[117] *Ep. Jo.* 3.13.2.
[118] *Pecc. Merr.*, XXIV, 37.
[119] O'Collins, *Saint Augustine on the Resurrection*, 58.
[120] *Serm.* 263.2; cf. 264.2. This language of faith as vision is surprising, and should perhaps be treated cautiously; Augustine's words occur in a sermon rather than a technical theological work.
[121] *Serm.* 140.54.
[122] *Ep. Jo.* 3.12.2.
[123] *Ad Simplician* I.II,21: "Who can welcome something in his mind which does not give him delight?".
[124] *Jo. Ev. Tract*. 26.4: "it is not enough to be drawn by the will; you are drawn even by delight".
[125] Cary, *Inner Grace*, 14-6.
[126] Cf. *Sol*. I.VII.12-14 on the importance of erotic love for successfully contemplating God, and *De Ordine* I.XI.34 on delight in *scientia*. For discussion with further references, cf. Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (New York: OUP, 2006), 267-71.
[127] E.g. *Gr. Et Pecc. Or.* XII.14, XIX.20; *Praed. Sanct.* V.9; *De Corrept* et *Grat.* 3; *Jo. Ev. Tract.* 26.7.

the "inner teacher" is often to aid in the process of understanding realities which are gestured to by external teachers. Thus perhaps in a manner similar to the "illumination" model of Catholic faith discussed in the first chapter, Christ the "inner teacher" enables converts to perceive the nature and force of "motives of credibility".

Yet there is reason to reject this reading of Augustine. Firstly, in his earlier works, before Augustine began to affirm that "external" helps to believe were insufficient to induce belief, Augustine actively contrasts "external" and "internal" summons to believe- cf. *Simpl.* I.II.2 "moved to faith by either an internal or an external urging", and *Spir. et Litt.* 60- "[God acts] either externally through the exhortations of the gospel…or internally" rather than suggesting that outward presentation of the faith is accompanied by an inner "illumination". Admittedly, Phillip Cary suggests that "internal admonitions" here refers to visions or experiences which are not the objects of sense-perception, but nevertheless involve an engagement of the sensory imagination,[128] as with divine visions which fall under the "second" level of vision discussed by Augustine in *Gn. Litt.* XII.15-30. [129] By contrast, the "internal" teaching of *De Gratia Christi* and later works refers to divine illumination, which need not involve any sensuous phenomenology. Yet it is noteworthy that in *De Gratia Christi,* Augustine apparently maintains this emphasis on a contrast between internal and external grace when invoking the imagery of 1 Corinthians 3:7. Augustine writes, "If we are to call this grace "teaching," we should certainly mean by it the teaching which we believe God pours out with an ineffable sweetness in the depths and interior of the soul, not merely through those who externally plant and water, but also through himself who gives the increase secretly. In that way he not merely reveals the truth, but also imparts love." [130] Whilst the text is ambiguous, Augustine may be suggesting that in working "internally", God gives an "increase" in faith which is his own gift in particular (*per se ipsum…incrementum suum*), in addition to that conveyed by external speakers.

[128] Cf. *Simpl.* I.2.2; and I.2.22, where Augustine talks of the (sensory) vision of Paul at his conversion.
[129] Cary, *Inner Grace*, 93.
[130] *Gr. Et. Pecc. Or.* XII.14: *"Haec gratia si doctrina dicenda est, certe sic dicatur, ut altius et interius eam deus cum ineffabili suauitate credatur infundere non solum per eos, qui plantant et rigant extrinsecus, sed etiam per se ipsum, qui incrementum suum ministrat occultus, ita ut non ostendat tantummodo ueritatem, uerum etiam inpertiat caritatem".*PL44/Col. 367.

In illustrating the internal grace given by God to converts, Augustine evokes Biblical precedents which might illustrate the phenomenology of "inner teaching" more clearly.[131] Of particular note is Augustine's favorite example[132] of the Persian King being persuaded to listen to Esther even before she had heard his plea,[133] which Augustine attributes not to "law and teaching uttering their lessons from without", but to "a secret, wonderful and ineffable power operating within, [by which] God works in men's hearts not only revelations of the truth, but also dispositions of good will".[134] In this example, it appears that God can influence the decisions of humans to believe and act well without any external summons involving "motives of credibility", or (for all Augustine says) internal visionary experience. Another example of the phenomenology of "conversion" occurs in Confessions VIII.12.9 where Augustine is famously confirmed in his decision to lead a life of faith by reading (prompted by a mysterious voice) a Scriptural text opened at random (Romans 13:13-4). [135] As soon as he finished reading, "the light of certainty flooded my heart, and all dark shades of doubt fell away". Augustine's experience of conversion recalls some of those discussed in *Ad Simplicianum* I.II.15, where some are converted by Christ's simple preaching, without witnessing miracles. Notably, in neither of these examples is there any reference to motives of credibility becoming manifest. Rather, the change of the listeners heart/mind happens instantaneously, without any apparent consideration of "evidence" or rational reflection.

Whilst the examples which I have cited do not precisely clarify phenomenology of internal inspiration, in the case of conversion, they might suggest an experience as follows. A convert, upon hearing the gospel preached, suddenly finds the propositions taught luminous and attractive to believe (evoking epistemic "delight"). This might be compared with Plantinga's language of "impulsional evidence" making basic beliefs seem appropriate, and perhaps also the manner in which the mind is drawn to assent to (or, "contemplate") *a priori* truths. Additionally, the convert experiences the gospel as existentially fulfilling. It should be noted that when discussing the role of grace in conversion,

[131] For an illustrative selection, cf. *Gr. et Lib. Arb.* XXI.42.
[132] Cf. *C. Ep. Pel.* XX.38; *Gr. et Lib. Arb.* XXI.42.
[133] Augustine is referring to apocryphal versions of Esther 5; cf. Cary, *Inner Grace* 113 n.49.
[134] *Gr. Et Pecc. Or.* XXIV.25.
[135] Augustine already accepted the authority of the Church to some degree; cf. *Conf.* VIII.

Augustine is addressing a separate problem from the rationality of belief. However, I suggest that if Augustine raises the possibility of divinely-ordained conversions which are not based on perceptions of "evidence" for Christianity, he is unlikely to see these as instances of irrationality. The analysis and examples just discussed do not imply that Augustine's doctrine of grace rules out the possibility of converts coming to believe due to the "inner teacher" attracting a believer to faith by illuminating the cogency of the motives of credibility. Yet they do raise the possibility of belief ungrounded in such evidence on Augustine's religious epistemology.

3.2.5 Grace, Charity and Evidence

We have seen that Augustine's developed account of "internal" grace runs against the contention that he espoused evidentialism. I now present an additional argument to show that any analysis of faith on which humans are able by exercising their natural (post-fall) rational powers to ascend via the preaching of the gospel to faith and charity is not faithfully Augustinian. This is based on the fact that there is a problematic circularity between faith and love for Augustine, such that despite Augustine's narrative that we are morally purified by faith, faith seems to require love as much as love requires faith. If this is so, and Augustine does not hold that charity can be possessed without faith, (cf. *Enchiridion* 8), it is difficult to understand how either faith or love are ever attained. Augustine himself ponders this difficulty in *De Trinitate* VIII.

Luigi Gioia recounts that in *De Trinitate* VIII, Augustine aims to show that knowledge of the Trinitarian God requires "not only greater logical rigour… than any other subject…but more crucially a *conversion* of the knowing subject".[136] In this Book, Augustine is attempting to rouse the mind to contemplation of the Trinity, passing from analogies with material objects or mutable souls in the first chapter to the form of goodness itself, in the second. Augustine realises, moreover, that humans need the *will* to turn "inside themselves" to discover this form. But this, he notes, is just what his analysis of the human condition maintains that we lack: indeed, Augustine returns to his familiar suggestion

[136] Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 171.

that it is *faith* and its practices that can transform one's desire appropriately.[137] Yet as Augustine observes, it seems as if a vicious circle is close at hand. As detailed above, Augustine concedes that prior to belief we must have some understanding of the proposition we are assenting to. This is normally because we are familiar with some form contained in the object which we are trying to discover. For example, familiarity with bodily forms allows us to imagine events involving bodies which we have not witnessed, such as their resurrection. In the case of Paul, we are able to understand that he is a human by familiarity with ourselves and others,[138] and also that he is to be loved by sensing his participation in the form of Justice, which we have some knowledge of, even if we lack the virtue ourselves.[139] But perhaps there is, Augustine speculates, no relevant form to help us discover what the Trinity is like. Admittedly, there are intelligible numerical statements which propositional beliefs about the Trinity imply- e.g. that God is somehow tri-fold, but these are not what the soul is searching for in trying to visualise God as the highest good.[140] Indeed, as Gioia notes,[141] for Augustine it is not the physical actions and miracles of Christ alone which are sufficient to generate love for God in the believer, but rather an appreciation of Christ's divinity and of God's working through the Incarnation. Augustine concludes that we grasp divinity by contemplating the love of neighbour, which is inseparable from the love of God (cf. 1 John 4.16).[142] To be clear, Augustine notes not just *any* love enables us to understand God's nature: only pure love free from concupiscence can mirror the Trinity. Thus he claims that to gain the understanding of God requisite for faith, one should look towards one's love of friends: "Let no one say, 'I don't know what to love'. Let him love his brother…[after all], he knows the love he loves with better than the brother he loves".[143] However, it remains unclear whether Augustine is maintaining that before belief one *can* grasp something of God without Christian faith, and thus make an "ascent" to God from a natural state. Gioia rather

[137] *Trin*. VIII.3.
[138] *Trin*. VIII.3.7.
[139] *Trin*. VIII.4.9.
[140] *Trin* VIII.3.8.
[141] Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 80- "Temporal realities, even those which God himself uses for the purpose of making himself known, do not put knowledge of God at our disposal. This knowledge remains a matter of faith and love (*dilectio*)."
[142] *Trin* VIII.5.12
[143] *Trin.* VIII.5.12

alleges that Augustine here affirms the inseparability of faith and love, suggesting that one cannot possess either of these virtues without their simultaneous infusion by God.[144]

MacDonald, moreover, offers support to this view given his reading of Augustine's claim in *De Spiritu et littera* that faith is determined by human *voluntas*.[145] Adapting John Rist's understanding of the term as the deepest motivating desire possessed by a human,[146] MacDonald thereby concludes that it is only the gracious transformation of the will by faith which can incline one to believe.[147] Yet since, as I have shown, Augustine regards those impurified by faith as filled with cupidity, it seems that even without an appeal to the text cited above, there is a problematic circularity to Augustine's thoughts on the relationship between faith and love which excludes any natural intellectual movement to faith by examining motives of credibility.

To clarify, the problem which I have raised above is as follows. On Augustine's view, charity is only gained by religious practice and an awareness of God's generous offer of salvation. Charity requires faith. Yet at the same time, faith requires charity, both (i) for a proper understanding of its content and (ii) since belief is driven by desire for the object believed in (cf. above). Therefore, also seems as if charity must precede faith. Notably for the question of Augustine's evidentialism, this seems to rule out any movement towards faith by those without charity, for example by examining evidence for the Church's authority prior to belief. This tension would be overcome if faith and charity are inseparable, yet immediately infused together by God. Accordingly, it is possible for Augustine to allow that someone can come to faith by evaluating evidence, if God simultaneously gives her the gift of charity. Yet the clearest link between love and knowledge in Augustine's thought is found in his doctrine of illumination. Whilst perhaps the "inner teacher" *can* inspire love via or alongside the contemplation of evidence in favour of Christianity, we have already seen that there is little about Augustine's account of illumination regarding faith which requires such an illumination of evidence for faith to be rationally justified. On Augustine's religious epistemology, therefore, we have another reason to

[144] See Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 180-8.
[145] *Spir. et Litt.* 34.60.
[146] Cf. John Rist, "Faith and Reason" in Stump and Kretzmann, *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 33.
[147] MacDonald, "The Epistemology of Faith", 178.

expect that one must come to faith by divine illumination, which apparently need not involve the perception of evidence.

3.2.6 Augustine on Grace in Perspective

We have seen that there are tensions between "evidentialist" readings of Augustine and his mature account of faith. However, it is important to note that Augustine's views developed over time, and he did not necessarily come to grips with their latent inconsistencies. Gioia certainly goes too far in his refusal to ascribe proper knowledge and love of God to non-Christians in *De Trinitate*.[148] One should observe that a tension is inherent in the very purpose of the work set out in *Trin.* I.3-4, which claims both that without purification it is impossible to know God properly by reason, and then proposes to offer an explanation of the Trinity in order to convince non-Christians that they require purification. Contrary to Gioia's reading of Book VIII, in both Books I and XIII, Augustine claims that pagans do possess residual love and knowledge of God. As Ronald Cushman argues the position that "[s]ome residuum, some trace of awareness of God…is essential for the renewal of knowledge" is to be found throughout Augustine's works.[149] It seems, therefore, that Augustine frequently maintains that humans *can* make an ascent towards God when inspired by divine teaching, although this is inconsistent with his mature theory of grace.

Likewise, one should not assume that Augustine ought *always* to have held that evidentialism was false given his later rejection of Pelagianism.[150] I tentatively accept the contention of Patout Burns and Cary that *De Gratia Christi* represents a shift in Augustine's later works to regarding the assent of faith as produced in a similar manner to illumination and connected with the infusion of charity.

---

[148] Kenney, "Faith and Reason", 283-4 gives a positive account of Augustine's pre-Christian attempts to gain *sapientia* (cf. *Conf.* VII.17.23), and suggests that the main difficulty posed by sin to "Platonist" attempts at contemplation of the divine ideas is that concupiscence serves to distract the unconverted thinker, rendering their efforts unsustainable.

[149] Cushman, "Faith and Reason", 295. Cf. *En. Ps.* VI,8; *Conf.* VII.9.14; X.24.35.

[150] Here (and in some material assumed above), I am entering into controversial waters. Some scholars have argued- from different perspectives- that Augustine never really changes his positions on grace and the will, either in 396 or 318, as Patout Burns, Cary and Jenkins allege. A brief survey of positions is given in Jenkins, *Free to Say No*, ix-xii. The reader should note in particular Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 198-287, who argues that Augustine always placed a strong emphasis on the necessity of internal grace for conversion. Whilst I follow the argument of other scholars here (though lack space to defend their position), accepting Harrison's perspective would only strengthen my analysis of Augustine, by showing that he always held a doctrine of grace at odds with evidentialism.

Patout Burns argues that it was only from 418 onwards that Augustine took this position; well after his *volte face* on election in 396 and subsequent encounter with Pelagianism. [151] On this account, in works such as *De Spiritu et Littera* (412), Augustine regarded his rejection of Pelagianism as compatible with the idea that one could be induced to believe on the basis of external signs as well as inner inspiration (*Ibid.* 60). Similarly, one should note that the term *voluntas* is capable of a wider range of meanings than simply that of overriding affection discussed by MacDonald. Timothy Chappell suggests that it can additionally refer to volitions or the free actions which they prompt.[152] Jenkins argues that for Augustine, even when writing his "middle works" after 396, free will required the possibility to choose otherwise. [153] In *De Spiritu* 58, for example, the will is characterised as an "intermediate power" poised between good and evil; belief and unbelief. Augustine maintains that although humans can reject grace through libertarian free choice, God can know which internal or external calls they would reject if offered and thus retains a sovereignty regarding election. It is enough to guard against Pelagianism to maintain that we can only gain faith by these exhortations at God's initiative. God decides and ensures who will dis/believe by providing appropriate intellectual incentives to sway particular individuals. Jenkins argues, however, this did not remain Augustine's position. [154] Augustine's final position on free will is "compatibilist", and he moves so far against Pelagianism as to assert that God directly implants the will to believe, in the manner indicated by MacDonald.[155] In summary, Augustine's mature theory of grace is difficult to square with an evidentialist position on the relationship between faith and reason, but this does not happen immediately, and his eventual position is in tension with previous commitments.

[151] Burns, *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine* , 131-9; 141-2. Cf. Cary, *Inner Grace*, e.g. 93-7.
[152] Timothy Chappell, *Aristotle and Augustine on Freedom: Two Theories of Freedom, Voluntary Action and Akrasia* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 126.
[153] Jenkins, *Free to Say No*, 60.
[154] Jenkins, *Free to Say* No, 61.
[155] MacDonald, "The Epistemology of Faith", 177 further argues that it is only a resistible divine affection to believe that is implanted rather than an overriding affection and/or subsequent volition as Augustine suggests in the texts MacDonald has quoted. MacDonald fails to recognise that two quotations with which he supports his position are drawn from texts written before 418 (*Spir et. Litt*. and *Nat. et. Gr.*). MacDonald also quotes from *Gr. et Lib. Arb.* XVII (426/7 AD), where Augustine seems to talk of "co-operation" between grace and free will, but as Jenkins, *Free to Say No*, 85 argues, "The explanation for this [synergy] is that the "free choice" he is describing…is that which follows after conversion…The initial decision of faith…is a gift from God alone".

3.3 Augustine, Belief and Internalism

I have suggested that considerations of progressive strength give reason to reject "evidentialist" readings of Augustine, and also that (as on CRE) grace and the human will are necessary components of an "analysis of faith". I now examine Augustine's position on the question of whether "internalist" justification is necessary for religious beliefs to be rationally held.

In the first chapter, I suggested a negative internalist condition on justification (NG).[156] What would Augustine make of this condition? In general, it is difficult and anachronistic to attribute any position in the externalism/internalism debate to Augustine. It might be noted that Augustine does assume that mental states are luminous, and hence it would not be surprising if Augustine believes that if one knows, one is also in a position to come to know that one knows (Matthews[157] cites *De Trin* 15.12.21). Moreover, the human capacity for *scientia,* which is elevated above the ability for perception enjoyed by animals, seems to involve a conscious comparison of particular objects to one another and to the divine ideas. However, leaving aside the issue of whether or not Augustine is an internalist when it comes to knowledge, we might wonder whether Augustine thinks that one's reasons for believing in an authority must be internally accessible.

In debate with Manicheans, he maintains that if a book is brought forward as "Scriptural"- i.e. to be treated as an authority- it must have something to recommend it as such (particularly if it is of modern or uncertain provenance).[158] The Bible, is recommended by the authority of the Church (without which recommendation Augustine would not accept it as an authority). By contrast, Augustine will never be able to rationally accept the books of Manicheans, since they reject authority. Occasionally, Augustine also envisages authorities protesting their own reliability when under scrutiny. For, example, in *Lib. Arb* II.5, Evodius imagines an opponent asserting his own sincerity in religious enquiry in order to be accepted as a truth-seeker. So also in *F. Invis.* Augustine, perhaps for rhetorical reasons, portrays the Church as a figure attesting to her own trustworthiness. It is not clear, however,

[156] NG: S's belief b lacks justification in proportion to the plausibility with which it could easily seem to S (given her current epistemic lights) that b is not formed on grounds which reliably yield true beliefs.
[157] Gareth Matthews, *Augustine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 40.
[158] Cf. *C. Ep. Man.* V.6.

whether Augustine would recommend that one should believe only authorities which attest to their own reliability.

Happily, however, if I have characterised Augustine's views correctly, basic belief in Christianity fostered by divine illumination should meet my NG criterion for justification. This is because "impulsional evidence" in favour of belief in a proposition can allow that belief to meet NG, since impulsional evidence involves the impression that the belief is formed as an appropriate response to the truth of the matter. I have characterised the "delight" in the gospel which Augustine claims is fostered by the grace of "internal" divine teaching as akin to impulsional evidence in favour of propositions believed by Christian faith. If this reading is correct, then basic Christian beliefs produced according to an Augustinian account of "internal" divine teaching may pass my NG stipulation on justification.

4.0 Concluding Comparisons

I now conclude my comparison of Augustine's analysis of faith and CRE. Augustine was, like Reformed Epistemologists, driven to the opinion that Christian faith is rational by realising that the ideal of basing all beliefs on unquestionable epistemic foundations which garner universal acceptance renders unjustified many quotidian beliefs necessary for human flourishing. Augustine asserts that there is strong evidence for the rationality of committing oneself to the authority of the Church. However, he ultimately seems prepared to allow that one can rationally commit oneself to trusting in the deliverances of an authority without non-circular evidence for its reliability; although some indication (albeit perhaps the authority's own attestation) that it should be believed is sometimes necessary for rational belief. As on CRE, Augustine believed that Christian faith ought to be held with certainty (i.e. both strong credence and rational tenacity). Finally, Augustine came to see that belief was to be attributed to divine grace accepted by the human will, although Augustine later regarded the divine attraction of the will to believe as irresistible, making the assent of faith free in only a "compatibilist" sense. In *nuce*, there are significant lines of thought in Augustine which support a

"Reformed" epistemology similar to CRE, although Augustine sometimes makes statements which appear evidentialist.

Chapter Four: Aquinas on Faith and Evidence

1.0 Introduction

Aside from St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas is incontestably the theologian who has contributed most to the development of Catholic theology. It will not surprise the reader, then, that I seek to advance my argument that Catholic tradition contains analyses of faith similar to CRE by engaging with the Angelic Doctor's thought. Other than his enduring influence on Catholic theology, there is further reason to examine the thought of Aquinas. In the first chapter, I chronicled the lukewarm reception afforded to Reformed Epistemology by Catholic theologians responding to the positions outlined in *Faith and Rationality*. Arguably, Plantinga himself was partly responsible for this reaction, since "Reason and Belief in God" presents Aquinas as a "classical foundationalist" who believes that only propositions which are self-evident or evident to the sense can be the object of properly basic beliefs.[1] Plantinga further quotes from *Summa Contra Gentiles* (*SCG*) I,6 to establish that Aquinas holds the "evidentialist" position that in order to rationally believe a proposition on the basis of divine testimony conveyed by human messengers, it must first be established that God Himself is speaking through them on the basis of evidence acceptable to classical foundationalism.[2] In the case of Christianity, this evidence is provided by the fulfilment of prophecy, miracles and the quasi-miraculous spread of Christianity which indicate that the teaching of Christ and his Church faithfully transmits divine revelation. Indeed, Plantinga's initial evaluation of Aquinas as adhering to an "evidentialist" analysis of the rationality of religious belief was not atypical of the exegesis of Aquinas provided by contemporary analytic philosophers. [3]

[1] Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God", 39-44; 55-59.
[2] *Ibid.*, 44-7.
[3] Cf. John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 20-1; Terrence Penelhum "The Analysis of Faith in St. Thomas Aquinas", *Religious Studies* 13 (2) (1977). John Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997) also imputes this view to Pojman, *Religious Belief and the Will*, though this fails to note that although Pojman correctly claims that Aquinas believes that there is "solid evidence" in favour of the reliability of Christ and the Church as bearers of divine revelation (36), Pojman also refers to Aquinas' affirmation of the "self-authenticating" nature of faith generated by the "inner witness of the Holy Spirit" (34).

However, since *Faith and Rationality*, Plantinga and other Reformed Epistemologists have revised this reading of Aquinas.[4] In *Warranted Christian Belief*, Plantinga, who had previously contrasted the views of Aquinas with those of Calvin, dubs his model of faith the "[extended] Aquinas/Calvin model",[5] citing texts which indicate that Aquinas held that belief in theism and *sacra doctrina* could be "properly basic".[6] Plantinga ascribes his new position to the response of Catholic philosophers to his characterisation of Aquinas' position in "Reason and Belief in God".[7] As Plantinga indicates, whilst some Catholic philosophers responded to his critique of Aquinas by doubling down on some form of "evidentialism", a scholarly consensus has emerged on Aquinas since the late 1980's which suggests that Aquinas' position on faith and reason is close to that of Reformed Epistemology, and perhaps particularly concerned (like Plantinga) with "externalist" accounts of the justification of religious belief. [8] Even accounts which do not explicitly compare Thomas' position with Reformed Epistemology are now often concerned to rule out "evidentialist" readings of the former, although there are still some hold-outs, including some Catholic philosophers canvassed as opponents of Reformed Epistemology in the first chapter, and notably Richard Swinburne.[9]

Given that Plantinga has latterly claimed that his position has precedent in Aquinas (albeit without presenting a detailed exposition of Aquinas' views), it is fitting to examine the truth of this claim more thoroughly, and also to investigate whether Aquinas' position is closer to that of Plantinga or to my remodelled version of Reformed Epistemology (CRE). My task is arguably made easier by the prevalence of scholarly contention that Aquinas' position is closer to that of Reformed epistemology

[4] For other Reformed Epistemologists, note the argument of Nicholas Wolterstorff's "The Migration of Theistic Arguments" in Robert Audi and William Wainwright (ed.), *Rationality, Religious Belief and Moral Commitment: New Essays on the Philosophy of Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986). Hoitenga, *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga:*, 224 likewise suggests "Although the Thomist affirms a certain integrity to natural theology apart from faith…he limits its scope; furthermore, he does not necessarily subject the authority of Scripture to the evidentialism of reasoning apart from faith, as Wolterstorff points out."
[5] Cf. Plantinga, *WCB*, 168-170; 176-7; 249.
[6] He cites STIa.2.1 ad1; SCG III, 38; STIIaIIae 2.9 ad3.
[7] Plantinga, *WCB*, 82 n17.
[8] I use the term "evidentialism" here and below to refer to the position that rational belief must be grounded in evidence acceptable on classical foundationalism. Accordingly, when I argue that Aquinas is not an evidentialist below, I am not ascribing to him the position that one can rationally believe without any evidence whatsoever, if the term is broadly construed to include e.g. "impulsional evidence". Both Plantinga's "Extended A/C Model" and CRE are compatible with the position that beliefs must be rationally grounded in "impulsional" evidence.
[9] Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason* 2nd edn (Oxford: OUP 2005), 34-36.

than evidentialism.[10] However, for the purpose of this thesis, such scholarship is something of a double-edged sword, since it means that I run the risk of merely repeating the exegesis of others. Whilst engaging with contemporary secondary literature, therefore, I will attempt to focus Aquinas' own texts in elucidating his views. At the same time, I will sometimes bring modern exegesis of Thomas into conversation with Neo-Scholastic interpretations, which are often overlooked in current research. Moreover, whilst the following chapter may not constitute the most original part of my research, there I hope to add at least one nuance to the current conversation on Aquinas' account of faith.

Some discussion of Aquinas' religious epistemology either renders his position on the epistemic justification of religious belief "externalist" or claims that Aquinas can only maintain that Christian faith has "internalist" justification insofar as the believer has access to evidence (acceptable to classical foundationalism) for the truth of the proposition that God has revealed Christian doctrine.[11] This analysis is perhaps influenced by the fact that scholars making this argument often draw comparisons between Aquinas' views and those of Plantinga whose project appeals to externalist

[10] For those who draw explicit parallels between the position of Aquinas and Reformed Epistemology, cf. John Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith* (1997); Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003) and "Faith, Wisdom and the Transmission of Knowledge through Testimony" in Timothy O'Connor and Laura Frances Callahan, *Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue*, (Oxford: OUP, 2014); Keith Mascord, *Alvin Plantinga and Christian Apologetics* (Milton Keynes, Paternoster 2006); Paul MacDonald, "The Epistemology of Faith in Augustine and Aquinas" in Phillip Cary and John Doody (ed.) *Augustine and Philosophy*, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010); Bruno Niedebacher, "The Relation of Reason to Faith" in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: OUP, 2012); William Jay Wood, "Faith's Intellectual Rewards" in O'Connor and Callahan, *Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue*; Mark Wynn, "Religious Faith" in Graham Oppy (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Christian Philosophy of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2015) and especially the doctoral dissertation of James Brent "The Epistemic Status of Belief in Thomas Aquinas" (PhD diss., Saint Louis University, 2008) which is devoted to the contention that Aquinas foreshadows Plantinga in suggesting that propositions believed with faith are "properly basic beliefs". Other authors do not expressly compare Aquinas' views with those of Reformed Epistemologists, but give readings of Aquinas' account of faith favourable to such comparisons, explicitly rejecting "evidentialist" readings of Aquinas. These include Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Marie George "'Trust Me' 'Why should I?' Aquinas on Faith and Reason in *The Ever-Illuminating Wisdom of St. Thomas Aquinas: Papers Presented at a Conference of the Wethersfield Institute, New York City, October 14th, 1994* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999); James Ross "Aquinas on Belief and Knowledge" in William Frank and Gerard Etzkorn (ed.), *Essays Honoring Alan B. Wolter* (New York: Franciscan Institute, 1985), "Believing for Profit" in Gerald McCarthy (ed.) *The Ethics of Belief Debate* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986); Brian Shanley, *The Thomist Tradition* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 21-43; John Lamont, *Divine Faith* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2004), Bruce Marshall "Quod Scit Una Vetulla: Aquinas on the Nature of Theology" in Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (ed.) *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 2005) Richard Cross, "Testimony, Error and Reasonable Belief in Medieval Religious Epistemology" (forthcoming) and Kenneth Konyndyk, "Aquinas on Faith and Science" in *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1) (1995).

[11] For scholars dubbing Aquinas an externalist, cf. Martin Pickavé, "Human Knowledge" in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 319.

standards of positive epistemic status. However, this discussion omits to consider a potential resemblance between Aquinas' religious epistemology and "Phenomenal Conservatism", which holds an internalist view of justification. I argue that the "interior instinct" which on Aquinas' account renders propositions for belief credible, might be comparable to what proponents of Phenomenal Conservatism term an "appearance". On such a reading, Aquinas' position need not entail that believers without evidence for the divine revelation of Christian doctrine lack "internalist" justification for their faith. Indeed, there are reasons to hold that this is so even if the "interior instinct" is not susceptible to my suggested analysis.

The main aim of this chapter is to give an exposition of Aquinas' religious epistemology which shows its similarity to CRE. With this in mind, I begin by offering an overview of Aquinas' understanding of faith and its relationship to reason. Whilst necessary to understand the following debate over Thomas' views, this is happily not the *locus* of much disagreement between interpreters. In particular, I note the strong resemblance between Aquinas' position and that of Augustine (Section 2). [12] I then move on to consider the more contested issue of whether Aquinas holds an evidentialist view about the rational grounding of faith (Section 3). First, I examine texts from Thomas which seem to support this thesis, before moving on to consider texts and arguments cited by commentators who support a non-evidentialist reading of Aquinas. Although not all of these arguments are equally plausible, I will argue that there is sufficient material to indicate that Thomas rejected evidentialism.

It is less clear, however, what account Aquinas can offer of the rationality of faith given that he does not believe that faith is rationally grounded in "motives of credibility". In Section 4, I examine two current solutions to this problem, and argue that neither succeeds in demonstrating that faith possesses "internalist" rationality on Aquinas' account. I then propose my own solution to this difficulty, by suggesting that Aquinas' position may resemble "Phenomenal Conservatism", before drawing some concluding comparisons between Aquinas' account of faith and CRE.

[12] Which, given my reading of Augustine's analysis of faith, gives *prima facie* reason to hope that Aquinas will adopt a similarly anti-evidentialist position.

2.0 Aquinas' Account of Faith

Although Aquinas is sometimes presented as a theological trail-blazer who helped to revolutionise Scholastic thought (particularly, epistemology) by his integration of Christian philosophy with Aristotelian metaphysics, Aquinas' basic understanding of faith is very close to that of Augustine.[13] Aquinas conceives of two species of the act of faith: an "internal" act (i.e. a species of cognitive assent) and an "external" act ("confession")[14] of this belief, both of which are required for salvation, albeit under different circumstances, which also vary according to the intellectual ability of the believer. In what follows, however, I focus on the "internal" act of faith, making it explicit when I refer to confession.

2.1 The Formal Cause/Object of Faith

The first point to note is that Aquinas follows Augustine in making faith a matter of propositional assent on the basis of divine testimony, although to a greater extent than Augustine, he stresses that the act of faith is an assent to First Truth: i.e. God Himself. Aquinas explains the "object" of faith by reference to both its "material object" (faith's content/*fides quae*) and "formal object" (the reason for believing/*fides qua*).[15] With respect to the latter, faith is always an assent to first truth, since faith "does not assent to anything, except because it is revealed by God" (STIIaIIae1.1, *resp*.). In other words, although faith is an act of intellectual assent, it is also inter-personal insofar as it necessarily involves regarding God as a trustworthy testifier to what He reveals, and also an epistemic commitment to God as a person or agent. Thus Brent aptly characterises faith as "cleaving to" God in virtue of some property or action of His.[16] For example, one might characterise assent to the proposition "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" as clinging to God as Saviour.

[13] Aquinas' dependence on Augustine for his account of faith is evident from the passages where he gives a definition of the act of faith as "thinking with assent" (*cogitare cum assensione*), quoting from *De Praed. Sanct.* 2. (*DV* 14.1; STIIaIIae2.1), and from his quotation of Augustine throughout his exposition of faith.
[14] Cf. STIIaIIae 3.1.
[15] This mirrors the Augustinian division between believing God (*credere Deo*) and believing in God (*credere Deum*)- cf. STIIaIIae 2.2.
[16] Brent, "Epistemic Status*"*, 85.

It should be noted, however, that although faith formally consists of accepting truths because they are revealed by God, this does not prevent Aquinas laying great stress on the importance of adhering to the testimony of messengers through whom God speaks. In particular, Aquinas emphasises with Augustine the foundational importance of Scripture (sometimes used synonymously with *sacra doctrina*) [17] as an infallibly inspired document which contains at least implicitly the fullness of divine revelation.[18] However, Aquinas also highlights the importance for believers of adhering to the creeds and magisterial pronouncements of the Church. The universal Church is guided by the Holy Spirit so that it cannot err in interpreting the gospel when it agrees upon magisterial teachings as in ecumenical councils,[19] which must receive papal endorsement.[20] Aquinas can even go so far, therefore, as to consider believing on the basis of Scripture and the Church's teaching (since they are divinely inspired) as part of the formal object of faith.[21]

The definition of faith as belief on the basis of divine testimony has two further consequences. Firstly, when Aquinas talks of believing of the basis of divine testimony, he means that one can only have faith in propositions which God has *actually* revealed. Since Thomas maintains that God is necessarily omniscient and incapable of deceit, this makes faith factive: if a proposition can be assented to by an act of faith, it is true.[22] Secondly, in Aquinas' view, the virtue of faith precludes any "picking and choosing" by the believer about which divinely revealed propositions to believe.[23] Heretics lack the virtue of faith entirely, since they make assent to divine revelation contingent on their personal evaluation of propositions proposed for belief by the Church.[24] To exercise the virtue of faith, in other words, one must hold to the truths of faith simply because they are (actually) proposed

[17] E.g. STIa.1.8.
[18] STIIaIIae 1.9 obj1 . See, though, STIIIa25.3 ad4; 64.2 ad1 for an apparent endorsement of tradition as a separate source of authority from Scripture.
[19] Cf. STIIaIIae1.9 *sed contra*.
[20] Cf. STIIaIIae1.10.
[21] Cf. STIIaIIae5.3 resp- "Now the formal object of faith is the First Truth, as manifested in Holy Writ and the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth".
[22] STIIaIIae 1.3 *resp*.
[23] In this respect, Aquinas' understanding of faith differs from my suggestion above that on CRE believers may possess faith even if they fail to always and in every instance make Catholic faith their fundamental doxastic practice.
[24] STIIaIIae 5.2 *resp*- "*haereticus qui discredit unum articulum fidei non habet habitum fidei neque formatae neque informis*".

for belief by God.[25] In modern terms, the virtue of faith is conceived of both in an "externalist" light as the disposition to engage in a cognitive practice which functions appropriately in response to the prompting to believe divine revelation in appropriate circumstances, and also in an "internalist" sense as the *conscious* formation of faith-beliefs on the basis that they are divinely revealed.

Moreover, as Brian Shanley observes, in stating that faith has divine truth as its formal object, Aquinas also implies that God himself is the cause of the assent of faith. [26] Aquinas makes this point expressly elsewhere, where he insists that faith is a supernatural virtue: a habit infused by divine grace directing humans to beatitude.[27] As the Angelic Doctor makes clear, Augustine correctly affirms against the Pelagians that faith is not merely gracious insofar as the articles of faith are externally proposed for belief by preaching and recommended by miracles. Rather, since some perceive preaching and miracles without coming to faith, and since human free will cannot of itself perform a supernatural act, another "interior" cause must exist, which is sufficient (when added to the psychological circumstances) to produce assent.[28] As with Augustine's later theology of faith, this emphasis on grace can seem to rob the believer of any freedom in coming to believe, against Aquinas' own insistence of the importance of the will in the act of faith (cf. below). Indeed, for reasons connected with his broader cognitive psychology, some interpreters have argued that Aquinas holds a compatibilist account of free will.[29] Whilst I lack space to examine this claim, it seems important to note with Stump[30] that however Aquinas' account of human freedom is parsed, he is insistent that humans "co-operate" with the offer of grace which draws them towards assent, and envisages the possibility of humans culpably refusing their co-operation with God's call to faith.[31] Equally, Thomas

[25] Lamont, *Divine Faith*, 63 translates *In Rom*. C4 Lec 1- "if someone believes God to exist on account of certain human reasoning and natural signs, he is not yet said to have the faith of which we speak, but only when he believes for the reason that God says it".
[26] Shanley, *Thomist Tradition*, 29: "Intentional action involves engagement with realities outside the agent which are causally involved in the explanation of the action; the object determines the action to be a specific kind of action".
[27] Cf. STIaIIae64.1; IIaIIae6.1.
[28] STIIaIIae6.1 *resp*.
[29] For an overview of the modern debate as to whether Aquinas' account of free will is compatibilist or libertarian, cf. Thomas Williams, "Human Freedom and Agency" in Davies and Stump (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*. In my view, *De Malo* q.6 indicates that Aquinas rejects compatibilism- cf. Peter Furlong, "Indeterminism and Freedom of Decision in Aquinas" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2013).
[30] Stump, *Aquinas*, 377.
[31] Cf. STIIaIIae10.1.

follows Augustine in maintaining that God can infallibly produce in humans the will necessary for co-operation with grace.[32] While therefore Aquinas seems to imply (STIIaIIae 6.1) that grace itself is sufficient to explain why some believe and others fail to, I suggest Aquinas should be read in the cited passage as intending the term "grace" to include God's efficacious movement of the human will to make an act of faith.[33]

2.2 The Material Object of Faith

The situation regarding the material object of faith is more complicated. In an attenuated sense, faith simply assents to first truth itself.[34] This is because faith constitutes an incipient knowledge of God which has as its *telos* the beatific vision, where the faithful will enjoy direct knowledge of God unmediated by propositional assent. Aquinas concedes that contingent, historical events such as Christ's passion can also be objects of faith. Still, these are essentially related to God, since not only has He revealed them, but they are also known by God Himself through His own self-knowledge, caused by divine power, and bear witness to the process of salvation-history through which humanity is drawn towards beatific knowledge. As Bruno Niedebacher notes, therefore, each truth of faith has an essentially eschatological emphasis. [35] This leads Aquinas to highlight faith in Christ as saviour and in the Trinity as articles of particular eschatological significance in which one must believe explicitly after the coming of Christ.[36]

Despite this emphasis on First Truth as the material object of faith, Aquinas maintains that faith, like *scientia* and *opinio* is a form of propositional assent. [37] Although faith ultimately has as its material object the divine nature, on Aquinas' philosophy of mind knowledge of realities always depends on their particular mode of existence in the knower.[38] As *viatores*, our knowledge is derived from the

[32] Cf. STIaIae112.3 *resp*, where Aquinas quotes Augustine from *Persev*. XIV, and also cites John 6.45 (which Augustine employed to similar effect).
[33] STIIaIIae 6.1.
[34] Notably, Aquinas does not invoke Augustine as an authority to establish this point. He principally quotes Pseudo-Dionysius to the effect that "faith is concerned with the simple and never-changing truth" (*De Div. Nom.* VII)- cf. *DV* 14.8 *sed contra*; STIIaIIae 1.1 *sed contra*.
[35] Niedebacher, "The Relation of Reason to Faith", 338-9.
[36] Cf. STIIaIIae.2.7-8.
[37] Cf. *DV* 14.8 obj 12; STIIaIIae I.2 *sed contra*.
[38] Cf. *DV* 14.8 ad 5- "knowledge [*cognitio*] …takes place only through that which arises from it in the knower".

senses and exists in a complex way in the human mind (i.e. in intelligible species formed into propositions). Hence, knowledge of God and His saving activity is necessarily propositional whilst remaining knowledge *of* God, directing the believer to perceive Him immediately. As Aubert remarks,[39] this means that Thomas can characterise faith as not merely a preparation for, but an inchoate participation in the beatific vision,[40] and thus divine knowledge itself.[41] The eschatological orientation of faith also helps to account for Aquinas' insistence on faith's paramount importance for human life. In discussing the objection that faith and its intellectual correlate *sacra doctrina* are superfluous given that philosophy can study all beings and their ends under the light of natural reason, Aquinas repeatedly insists[42] that it is the fact that humans have a supernatural *telos* which makes a supernatural form of cognition necessary for humans to understand and pursue this end.[43]

2.3 Faith, Knowledge and the Will

For Aquinas, following Augustine, faith is a manner of assent to a proposition which lies between mere belief (*opinio*) and a particular species of knowledge or cognition (*scientia* or *intellectus*, on which *scientia* depends). Precisely, when a proposition is assented to with faith, it is assented to without "fear of the opposite", which is present in the case of opinion but lacking in understanding/scientific knowledge, and yet without the "vision" of truth granted by these latter.[44] By *intellectus*, Aquinas means the basic, spontaneous and involuntary knowledge of a thing's essence which humans can arrive at via the "light" of "natural reason".[45] The best way in which to translate and construe "*scientia*" in modern epistemological terminology is a matter of debate. John Jenkins,

[39] Aubert, *Le Problème*, 47.
[40] Cf. *DV* 14.2 *resp*- "Consequently, we must have within us some initial participation of this supernatural knowledge. We have it through faith, which by reason of an infused light holds those things which are beyond our natural knowledge".
[41] *Boe.* 2.2
[42] Cf. *SCG* I.5; *DV* 14.6; STIIaIIae2.3.
[43] Faith is also practically necessary for those who have little leisure or intellectual ability to secure even a natural knowledge of God and the pursuit of human happiness, particularly since philosophy is a demanding intellectual pursuit which often produces erroneous opinion due to human fallibility. Cf. *SCG* I.5; STIa.1.1 *resp*. However, unlike Augustine and Plantinga, Aquinas does not emphasise the existence of cognitive effects of sin which require restoration by grace.
[44] "Yet [faith] is said to be 'less than scientific knowledge' because faith does not have vision as science does, although it has the same firm adherence. And yet it is said to be "more than opinion" because of the firmness of assent" (*DV* 14.2 *Resp*). Cf. STIIaIIae 2.1 *resp*.; *Boe.* 3.1 *resp*.
[45] Shanley, *Thomist Tradition*, 31.

who gives a detailed exposition, suggests that Aquinas' epistemological terms do not precisely translate into modern equivalents.[46] *Scientia*, for Aquinas, is a particular form of cognition discussed by Aristotle (the Latin for "*episteme*"). When a proposition is known by *scientia*, it is understood on the basis of a demonstration from principles which are self-evident (*per se notum*) - that is, (at least as regards secular "sciences") from an essence or nature of the appropriate kind to the particular science.[47] An example from Aristotle is the deduction of the proposition that all vines are deciduous from the *intellectus* that vines are essentially broad-leaved, and that broad-leaved plants are essentially deciduous.[48] This also means that only universally true propositions can be known with *scientia*, since they must be logically inferred from the knowledge of essences. [49]

Given that *scientia* is a particular species of knowledge, James Ross argues that Aquinas' distinction between faith and *scientia* does not rule out faith being another form of knowledge. Ross points to passages where Aquinas specifically describes faith as an act of cognition (*cognitio*), which Ross characterises as a form of knowledge.[50] However, it should be noted that *cognitio* is a term of broader application than Ross suggests. Although it can refer to veridical and reliably-truth-directed assents which analytic philosophers might term "knowledge", it can also refer to assents to false propositions.[51] Aquinas' account of faith may be compatible with a contemporary sense of "knowledge", therefore, but this does not mean that he was close to recognising this fact in his own terminology.

Pickavé argues[52] that whilst *scientia* thus defined clearly differs from analytic accounts of knowledge, and Aquinas believes it proper to hold beliefs not known with *scientia*, it is nevertheless

[46] Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 1; 15-17. For an argument that Aquinas' notion of faith is compatible with "knowledge" as understood by contemporary epistemology, cf. John Hawthorne, "Aquinas on Faith and Knowledge: Response to Robert Pasnau" in John Marenbon (ed.) *Continuity and Innovation in Medieval and Modern Philosophy: Knowledge, Mind and Language* (Oxford: OUP/British Academy, 2013).
[47] By "on the basis of", I here mean both that the person with *scientia* understands the demonstration itself (not merely that a demonstration exists), and also that the demonstration is the cause of the person's assent to the proposition thus demonstrated. Cf. Jenkins, *Faith and Knowledge*, 47.
[48] *Posterior Analytics* II.16-7; Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 15.
[49] Cf. STIa.1.2 obj.2.
[50] E.g. *DV* 14.2.obj15- "Faith is a sort of knowledge (*cognitio*)"; cf. *SCG* I,3; STIa.12.13ad3. Cf. Ross "Aquinas on Belief and Knowledge", 45-8.
[51] Pickavé, "Human Knowledge", 311 notes references to "false cognition" in STIa17.3; *S*TIaIIae2.3ad3.
[52] Pickavé "Human Knowledge", 317.

useful to retain the translation of "*scientia*" as knowledge. This translation acknowledges that Aquinas sets up *scientia* as an epistemic ideal, of which other forms of inferential assent fall short. Aquinas' positioning of faith between "opinion" and "science" expands Augustine's exposition of faith as falling short of the certainty granted by corporeal or spiritual "vision", which is Augustine's hall-mark of knowledge. Aquinas in effect notes more clearly the distinction between immediate and inferential "vision" of the truth of a proposition, and suggests that in faith, we neither immediately understand that the propositions believed are true as in the case of "first principles", or assent to them on the basis of a demonstration from such propositions.[53] However, Aquinas follows Augustine in holding that faith is incompatible with *scientia* because it is incompatible with vision, of which faith is rather a foretaste and help towards (citing the definition of faith in Hebrews 11.1 as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [*argumentum*] of things unseen").[54]

One reason which Thomas has for arguing that faith is incompatible with vision is fidelity to the Biblical emphasis which he places on faith as a form of cognition awaiting eschatological completion. But Aquinas also follows Augustine in suggesting that faith is- for humans- not compelled by evidence which forces the intellect to assent, but rather a matter of free choice exercised by the will. This allows acts of faith to be meritorious, although since assent is strictly an act of the intellect, faith is an intellectual rather than a moral virtue.[55] Aquinas notes that in assent which depends upon "vision" (i.e. paradigmatically, truths which are *per se nota* or the object of scientific demonstration; but also those known through immediate sense perception), the intellect is immediately and automatically moved to assent by the object perceived. However, where the truth of a proposition is not immediately evident or deducible from what is evident, it is the will which determines the assent of the intellect (and its certitude). As Stump suggests,[56] this does not mean that Aquinas holds that one can believe *just anything*- in particular, one cannot on his account choose to believe propositions which are patently false or (perhaps) propositions which have *nothing* to make them credible to the

[53] STIIaIIaeI.4-5.
[54] *DV* 14.2.*resp.*
[55] *DV* 14.4 ad6; STIIaIIae2.9.
[56] Stump, "Faith, Wisdom", 211.

intellect.[57] Since the act of faith is completely certain even though the intellect is not compelled to give assent, it is the power of the will which determines the unqualified nature of assent.[58]

What moves the will to give such assent? To clarify, I now briefly sketch Aquinas' action theory. Aquinas famously holds to an "intellectualist" position, claiming (*in nuce*) that the will is- at least, for the most part- moved in accordance with knowledge produced by the intellect. On this account, the will is fixed in its desire for something particular, namely "goodness"[59] which in the case of rational creatures is termed "happiness".[60] Aquinas seems to claim that each person acts (or perhaps, should act or is caused to act?)[61] in line with a single, overall notion of what is perceived as realising human potential, although humans differ in their judgement as to what our "happiness" consists in.[62] In a given situation, the process leading to action starts with the perception by the intellect that some end (usually a subordinate end) is conducive to the fulfilment of our happiness. This elicits a will (*voluntas*) for the end. The intellect then presents various actions as means to obtaining the end, some of which are endorsed as suitable possibilities of action by the will. Particular volitions to act (at least, those considered volitions proper to human nature) are then produced by an act of the will in line with what the intellect perceives to be the action which is most appropriate, all things considered, to obtain the ends an agent has in view.[63] Thus although there is debate amongst interpreters as to whether or not the will can sometimes act on the intellect without a prior act of the latter (for example, by moving the intellect to consider particular alternatives in its deliberations)[64], the general direction of movement in Aquinas' action theory is from the intellect's perception that an act is appropriate to the will's decision to perform it.[65]

For Aquinas, there are two basic categories of good capable of moving the will to assent to faith: those connected with obtaining the truth, and those connected with obtaining the good. As Michael

[57] i.e. propositional or impulsional evidence.
[58] Cf. STIIaIIae2.1 ad3
[59] STIaIIae 8.1.
[60] See e.g. STIaIIae 5.1 *resp*; *Ibid*. 5.3 *resp*.
[61] Cf. Cross, "Testimony", 201.
[62] STIaIIae 1.5-6.
[63] For the above, cf. STIaIIae questions 12-16.
[64] Cf. Cross, "Testimony", 203.
[65] Cf. STIaIIae 9.1.

Sherwin notes, there seems to have been an ongoing development of Aquinas' thought on this matter.[66] Firstly, in the *Scriptum*, Aquinas seems to believe that the *ratio* which inclines the will to believe an article is just the perception that God (a reliable testifier) is revealing that article.[67] Shortly afterwards, in *De Veritate* 14.1, Aquinas holds that faith is produced by the desire for heavenly reward (i.e. the beatific vision). In the *Summa Theologiae*, however, Aquinas places less emphasis on this desire for reward motivating faith. Rather, there are two different motives presented for belief, one of which is concerned with obtaining truth, and the other with obtaining goodness. Firstly, Aquinas sometimes seems to imply that the will is motivated to believe on the grounds that the intellect presents belief as a reliable way of perceiving important truths about God and his plan for human life. One might interpret Aquinas' apparent insistence on the importance of evidence for divine revelation as something which motivates belief to this effect, particularly in STIIaIIae5.2, where he considers the example of those so over-awed by the evidence of miracles that their wills cannot help but assent to divine teaching.[68] On the other hand, Aquinas continues in the *ST* to affirm the role of attractions to believe which are not truth-related. One of these may be seen in the role of the "interior instinct" and the "light of faith" which cause the believer see that it is good to believe (cf. below). More importantly, perhaps, Aquinas stresses in ST that saving faith is *fides formata*: faith formed by charity.[69] On this account, which clearly draws on Augustine's teaching that only faith "*in Deum*" suffices for salvation, the believer's will to believe is an exercise of *caritas*- i.e. love of God for His own sake.[70] Aquinas does not claim that formed faith initially attracts the believer, since charity presupposes faith.[71] Yet Stump notes, therefore, that there is a sense in which the believer who possesses formed faith continues to believe God because she loves Him.[72]

Accordingly, there is a delicate interplay in Aquinas' cognitive psychology between the desire to believe because it is conducive to human happiness, and because it is true. For example, the desire to

[66] Michael Sherwin, *By Knowledge and Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington DC: CUA Press, 2005), 131-146.
[67] *SSS.* III.d23.q2.a2; cf. Sherwin, *By Knowledge and Love*, 136.
[68] This text is controversial (see below).
[69] STIIaIIae4.3. Cf. *DV* 14.6.
[70] STIIaIIae26.5 ad2.
[71] STIIaIIae26.7 ad5.
[72] STIIaIIae4.5 *resp*.

assent to articles of faith out of charity presupposes a perception that God exists and that the Church is a locus of His revelation. On the other hand, Aquinas often seems to regard hope for the eternal life promised in the gospel as an important spur to belief. Against Lamont, however, one need not assume that Aquinas' insistence upon both kinds of motives for faith necessarily makes either redundant, as rationally coming to faith might involve the co-operation of both such motives.[73] I will explore this interplay at greater length below.

To conclude this section, it has been shown that Aquinas develops a fundamentally Augustinian religious epistemology. Faith consists of believing propositional truths with certainty, on the grounds that they are revealed by God. These propositions are in fact contained within Scripture, correctly interpreted by the Church, and constitute a step towards is immediate, non-propositional knowledge of God in heaven. Since faith is incompatible with understanding (*intellectus*) or of being derived from principles so understood (*scientia*), its existence and certainty are the result of an exercise of the will, which is ideally shaped by love for God (*caritas*). Faith, hope and charity are all theological virtues, and thus graciously infused into the believer by God with the co-operation of her will.

3.0 Aquinas and Evidentialism

This analysis of faith, however, leaves open a crucial question. Granted that faith is certain assent to divinely revealed propositions on the basis that they are divinely revealed, how and why does the believer appropriately come to believe that God reveals Himself in the Church's teaching? One answer would be that the believer has *evidence* for her belief that God really speaks through Christ and the Church: evidence which should in principle be accessible to a non-believer by the light of natural reason, such as the apparent performance of miracles by one claiming to be an oracle of revelation.[74] Another would be that the believer holds this belief in a *basic* manner.[75] In order for

[73] Lamont, *Divine Faith*, 63-8.
[74] i.e. evidence acceptable to classical foundationalism. This is the sort of evidence about which I consider the issue of Aquinas' "evidentialism" in this section.
[75] Or else that this belief is held on the basis that the speaker *claims* to be conveying divine revelation, where the practice of trusting what the believer says (through God) is a basic belief-forming mechanism for the believer, which is not adhered to solely in virtue of any "evidence" for its reliability which is perceived by the believer.

Aquinas to hold a position comparable to that of Reformed Epistemology and CRE, he must reject the former position and endorse the latter.

3.1 Aquinas the Evidentialist?

Several texts cumulatively suggest that Aquinas teaches that faith is both caused to exist by evidence as to the divine origin of the gospel propounded by human evangelists, and that this grounding for faith is normative, insofar as such evidence- and perhaps, it alone- can render the assent of faith rational. Unsurprisingly, Aquinas does not use the term "evidence" when discussing the rationality of faith. However, he makes frequent references to "signs" and "miracles" as involved in the formation and justification of belief, and it is clear that such phenomena are publicly accessible as data for believers and non-believers alike to explain as they see fit. In this sense, Plantinga was right to countenance the possibility that Aquinas adheres to "evidentialist" about the rational grounding of faith, allied to a classical foundationalist picture of which beliefs are "properly basic".

Following James Brent, I will divide my exposition of texts favourable to an "evidentialist" reading of Aquinas into three parts. Firstly, there are passages which indicate that faith is caused by the perception of miraculous signs indicating the divine origin of those who claim to convey divine revelation. Secondly, there are passages which suggest that faith is rendered rational by (being based on?) miracles. Finally, some texts suggest that this grounding in the evidence of "signs" is *necessary* for faith to be rational. Cumulatively, the following passages suggest that there is *prima facie* strong textual support for an evidentialist reading of Aquinas' religious epistemology.

3.1.1 Faith Begotten from Signs

As Roger Aubert notes, it is beyond dispute that throughout his writings, Aquinas believes that the mission of those tasked with conveying divine teaching is often accompanied by the performance of miracles, which indicate the divine origin of their message.[76] An important text in this regard is the

[76] Aubert, *Le Probleme*, 64.

last verse in Mark (16:20),[77] leading Aquinas to write, for example, "*Veritas autem praedicantis per miracula confirmatur, ut dicit Mc ult*." (*SSS.* I Prol.q1.a.5).[78] God performs miracles in the lives of preachers to show both the truth of their message and their personal sanctity (cf. *In Jn.* C9 Lec. 3 v31; STIIIa43.a1 *resp*), and hence Christ himself performed miracles "in order to confirm his doctrine and in order to show forth his Divine power" (*Ibid*. a3 *resp*). Indeed, the famous passage cited by Plantinga (*SCG* I,6) indicates that according to Aquinas not only miracles wrought by Christ and his disciples, but also the fulfilment of prophecy[79] and the rapid conversion of the world to Christianity[80] constitute confirmation of the gospel's divine origin. This text is worth quoting at length, to illustrate the variety of evidence to which Aquinas typically appeals when discussing public evidence for Christianity:

"[Divine revelation] reveals its own presence, as well as the truth of its teaching and inspiration, by fitting arguments; and in order to confirm those truths that exceed natural knowledge, it gives visible manifestation to works that surpass the ability of all nature. Thus, there are the wonderful cures of illnesses, there is the raising of the dead, and the wonderful immutation in the heavenly bodies; and what is more wonderful, there is the inspiration given to human minds, so that simple and untutored persons, filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit, come to possess instantaneously the highest wisdom and the readiest eloquence. When these arguments were examined, through the efficacy of the abovementioned proof, and not the violent assault of arms or the promise of pleasure, and (what is most wonderful of all) in the midst of the tyranny of the persecutors, an innumerable throng of people, both simple and most learned, flocked to the Christian faith. In this faith there are truths preached that surpass every human intellect; the pleasures of the flesh are curbed; it is taught that the things of the world should be spurned. Now, for the minds of mortal men to assent to these things is the greatest of miracles, just as it is a manifest work of divine inspiration that, spurning visible things, men should

[77] "*Illi autem profecti praedicaverunt ubique, Domino cooperante et sermonem confirmante sequentibus signis*" (Vulgate); "And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it" (NRSV).
[78] The text is also cited at, e.g. *DV* q.14 a.10 ad11; *SCG* III.154.8; *In Jn* C9 Lec 1 v1; STIa114.a4 obj 3; IIaIIae171 a1 *resp*.; IIaIIae178.a1 *resp*.
[79] Cf. STIIIa171.1.
[80] Cf. *In Matt*. C10 Lec 1 v1.

seek only what is invisible.

Now, that this has happened neither without preparation nor by chance, but as a result of the disposition of God, is clear from the fact that through many pronouncements of the ancient prophets God had foretold that He would do this."

Postponing briefly the matter of *how* Aquinas believes these signs constitute evidence of the truth of Christianity, there are many texts indicating that one can come to faith on the basis of perceiving them. Aquinas puts the matter succinctly in commenting upon John 9, writing: "for our Lord's works produce faith in the things that he says", before referencing Mark 16.20.[81] A similarly straightforward attestation to the function of miracles in producing faith is found in *DV* q14.a10.ad11: "We believe the prophets and apostles because the Lord has been their witness by performing miracles, as Mark [16.20] says". The causal role of signs in bringing people to faith can even be stressed when the need for exterior preaching (necessary for the believer to have knowledge of the articles of faith) and an inner call of grace (necessary for faith in virtue of its supernatural nature) are likewise maintained.[82] To summarise in Aquinas' words: "*Adjuvatur autem a Deo aliquis ad credendum tripliciter. Primo quidem per interiorem vocationem…secondo per doctrinam et praedicationem…tertio per exterior miracula*" (*Quodl*. 2 q4 ad6).[83] Moreover, as Brent argues, the causal impact of miracles on faith is attested by many passages composed throughout Aquinas' career, and so cannot be regarded as a matter on which Aquinas changed his mind.[84]

3.1.2 Faith Rationally Grounded by Signs

Further, Aquinas advances miracles and the like to explain the rationality of faith. In his early commentary on the Sentences, for example, Aquinas refers to the fact that miracles "confirm" the truth of the faith.[85] The use of similar language in other contexts makes it clear that Aquinas means that miracles have the role of providing evidence for the truth of Christian doctrine, such that faith is

[81] *In Jn* 9 Lec 1.
[82] Cf. *SCG* III.154.4; STIIaIIae 6.1ad2; *In Rom* C8 Lec 6 v29.
[83] "But a person is helped to believe by God in three ways. Firstly, through an inner calling…secondly, through preaching and instruction…thirdly, through outward miracles" (My translation).
[84] Brent, "Epistemic Status", 131.
[85] Cf. *SSS* I prol.q1a5.

rationally permissible. Thus when Aquinas responds to the objection that faith, being incompatible with vision, is intellectually irresponsible, he appeals to the "confirmation" of miracles to demonstrate the rationality of belief. This is evident from several texts. One famous extract which I discuss later is STIIaIIae2.9ad3, where Aquinas rebuts the charge that Christians believe with undue haste by maintaining that "[t]he believer has sufficient motive for believing, for he is moved by the authority of Divine teaching confirmed by miracles, and, what is more, by the inward instinct of the Divine invitation: hence he does not believe lightly." In *SCG* I,6 which I quoted above, Aquinas mentions the forms of evidence he lists there as evidence that that "those who place their faith in this truth, however, 'for which human reason offers no experimental evidence' do not believe foolishly as though 'following artificial fables' (II Peter 1:16)". Similarly, the statement in *DV* 14.10 ad11 that Christians believe because of miracles "confirming" the faith is a reply to the objection that it is foolish to assent (unconditionally) to the word of divine truths conveyed through fallible and potentially deceptive intermediaries.

This should not be taken to imply, however, that Aquinas is so worried about the possible of human deception that he considers most belief based on human testimony irrational. Rather, Aquinas deploys arguments similar to those of Augustine to show that trust in other humans is necessary for the flourishing of human society: "[t]hen again if one were willing to believe only those things which one could know with certitude, one could not live in this world. How could one live unless one believed others? How could one know that this man is one's own father?"[86] It is also necessary to take certain statements on faith when receiving instruction from a teacher in some science.[87] However, just as Augustine suggested that humans could display evidence of their trustworthiness, Aquinas indicates that humans can give evidence of their own reliability at conveying the truth,[88] and likewise that of messengers whom they send on their behalf, as when a king puts his seal to a letter.[89]

[86] *In Symb. Apost.* Prol.; cf. *Boe.* 2.q3a1co2.
[87] Cf. *Ibid* co2; *DV* 14,10.
[88] Cf. *SSS* III d.24a3sol.2ad1, where he states that "*credere hominum absque ratione probabili est nimis cito credere*".
[89] *In Symb. Apost.* Prol; STIIIa43.a1 *resp*.

Just how do miraculous signs confirm the truth of faith? They do so in two ways. In order to believe someone's testimony, one must establish that they both have knowledge of the information they claim to transmit, and that they have the moral integrity to shun deceit. Regarding revelation, it is naturally knowable that God is omniscient and incapable of lying, and accordingly that He should be trusted.[90] However, when humans proclaim the gospel, there is the possibility that they are not really conveying divine revelation. Accordingly, God accredits those who truly speak in His name, by producing effects proper to His divine power. Aquinas defines miracles as "things that are at times divinely accomplished, apart from the generally established order in things",[91] maintaining that although demons can cause quasi-miraculous effects, they cannot produce miracles properly speaking since they lack the requisite power over the order of nature.[92] Miracles are effects which indicate the action of God, as are prophetic utterances, which proceed from his unique foreknowledge.[93] The presence of miracles in preachers, then, constitutes proof that the speaker is faithfully transmitting divine teaching. Aquinas puts the matter succinctly in *In Jn.* 9 Lec 3 v1: "We must realise that no true miracle happens except by the divine power, and that God is never witness to a lie. I say, therefore, that whenever a miracle is performed in testimony to a doctrine that is being preached, that doctrine must be true".[94] Aquinas envisages humans naturally reasoning towards the truth of a doctrine from the presence of miracles which confirm the status of the preacher. A famous passage is often used to illustrate this chain of reasoning- "if a prophet, while preaching the word of God, were to foretell something, and were to give a sign by raising a dead person to life, the intellect of a witness would be convinced so as to recognize clearly that God who lieth not, was speaking",[95] and Aquinas also lays out such spontaneous reasoning in real-life situations in his Biblical commentaries.[96]

Secondly, as Aubert suggests, miracles are occasionally fitting to immediately confirm the truth of what is being preached, by raising its probability. For example, Aquinas notes that Christ's divinity

[90] *Boe.* 2.q3.a1.ad5.
[91] *SCG*III.110; cf. STIa110.a4 *resp*.
[92] Cf. *Ibid*; STIa114.a4.
[93] Cf. *SCG* III.154.
[94] By contrast, false prophets are not helped by God to produce miracles: "wicked men who teach a false doctrine never work true miracles in confirmation of their teaching" (STIIaIIae117.a2.ad3).
[95] STIIaIIaeq5.a2. *resp*.
[96] E.g. *In Matt* 12 Lec2.

can be proved from the character of his miracles.[97] The particular miracles which Christ performed were also fitting to confirm His message that He is the Saviour of the World. Hence Christ expelled demons to show that He was to save mankind from the power of the devil.[98] Aquinas also claims that the presence of one miracle can confirm the plausibility of another. For example, the raising of Lazarus can induce faith in the future resurrection, presumably insofar as it is a sign of the general resurrection, and raises its prior probability.[99]

3.1.3 Miracles Necessary for Rational Faith?

Finally, there are a few passages (again, written throughout his career) where Aquinas seems to state that evidence of the sort outlined above is requisite for the rationality of faith. Gardeil cites *SSS* IIId. 2a1qc4ad4 as suggesting that some evidence for the reliability of those claiming to convey divine teaching is required for fitting assent- "*nec oportet quod in tali homine revelationem habente aliquis suam fidem implicet quosque talis homo ad ejus notitiam deveniat, vel divinitus, vel per famam humanam*". [100] But, as Gardeil observes, elsewhere in the same work, Aquinas identifies miracles as the evidence which shows God to be speaking through men.[101] In his middle period, Aquinas can claim in *SCG* III.154.8 that "because oral teaching that is offered requires confirmation so that it may be accepted… because things that are of faith are not evident to human reason, it was necessary for some means to be provided whereby the words of the preachers of the faith might be confirmed", before enumerating the varieties of miraculous and prophetic witness afforded to true apostles. Finally, Brent lists a number of passages from the *Summa Theologiae* which stress the necessity of such evidence for faith to be rational. Perhaps the most famous text is *ST*IIaIIae 1a4ad2 where Aquinas replies to the charge that faith is compatible with sight since it is compatible with the immediate vision of preaching: "Those things which come under faith can be considered in two ways. First, in particular; and thus they cannot be seen and believed at the same time, as shown above.

[97] STIIIa43.1 *resp*; 43.4.
[98] STIIIa44.1 *resp*.
[99] *De Pot* 6.2 ad9.
[100] Ambrose Gardeil, "Credibilité" in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Bernard Loth and Jean Michel Alfred Vacant, (ed.) *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, Commencé sous la direction de A. Vacant.* (15 vols), Vol.XXIV, (Paris: 1907-8) 2272.
[101] Cf. *SSS* IIId.25.q.2.a1qc4.ad4 –"*ad hoc datum est hominibus facere miracula ut ostendere qupd Deus per illos loquitur"*.

Secondly, in general, that is, under the common aspect of credibility; and in this way they are seen by the believer. For he would not believe unless, on the evidence of signs or of something similar, he saw that they ought to be believed." Likewise, STIIaIIae178.a1*resp* suggests that "the word [of preachers] needs to be confirmed in order that it be rendered credible. This is done by the work of miracles, according to Mark 16.20…"[102] In light of such passages, it seems that not only is Aquinas committed to the modest thesis that miracles offer evidence of the truth of Christianity, but that he even makes believing on the basis of miracles a common and *necessary* condition of a rational faith. This is surely an "evidentialist" thesis.

3.2 Reforming Readings of Aquinas

As stated above, however, the consensus position amongst interpreters is that Aquinas rejects an evidentialist account of faith's rationality. I now examine several arguments put forward by commentators to support this contention, in ascending order of strength, before re-evaluating the force of the apparently evidentialist texts just cited.

3.2.1 Are Evidentialist Readings of Aquinas at Odds with his Emphasis on Grace?

Several interpreters, most explicitly Shanley, advance the following argument.[103] If faith were rendered credible and caused by the perception of miraculous evidence that God was speaking through His messengers, the act of faith would not be essentially supernatural since assent on the basis of such signs is possible via natural human cognitive faculties. But Aquinas affirms that the act of faith is essentially supernatural, as illustrated above. Therefore, the evidentialist account sketched above must be flawed.

[102] Cf. STIIIa43a1*resp*- "since those things which are of faith surpass human reason, they cannot be proved by human arguments, but need to be proved by the argument of Divine power: so that when a man does works that God alone can do, we may believe that what he says is from God".
[103] Shanley, *Thomist Tradition*, 25-6: "Neither do miracles or signs provide some sort of quasi-inductive rational warrant for belief since…such "evidence" can never produce objective certainty and is only persuasive on the basis of the interior movement of grace". See also Jenkins, *Faith and Knowledge* 165; MacDonald, "The Epistemology of Faith", 181; Davies, *Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 283.

There is one passage which some interpreters take to be a counter-example to the claim that faith is essentially a supernatural act.[104] In STIIaIIae5.2, Aquinas considers whether demons have faith, which although affirmed by James 2.19, seems hard to square with the objection that they lack grace. Thomas distinguishes two varieties of faith, corresponding to two ways in which the will can be moved to assent to truth when assent is not compelled by vision. He writes:

"Now, that the will moves the intellect to assent, may be due to two causes. First, through the will being directed to the good, and in this way, to believe is a praiseworthy action. Secondly, because the intellect is convinced that it ought to believe what is said, though that conviction is not based on objective evidence. Thus if a prophet, while preaching the word of God, were to foretell something, and were to give a sign, by raising a dead person to life, the intellect of a witness would be convinced so as to recognize clearly that God, Who lieth not, was speaking, although the thing itself foretold would not be evident in itself, and consequently the essence of faith would not be removed."

Aquinas contends that demons believe in only the second way, but the example he uses suggests the possibility of "acquired" faith in humans, in those who are moved to belief by sufficient evidence. However, as Jenkins argues, this example is not what it seems at face value.[105] Even fallen angels have superior cognitive faculties to humans.[106] This enables them to perceive the evidence of miracles so clearly that they are compelled to believe. Thomas accordingly makes clear in his reply to the second objection in STIIaIIae5.2 that humans, who lack such acumen, are not thus forced to believe, and hence elsewhere calls the faith of humans equivocal to that of demons.[107] If this text provides any support to the notion that acquired faith is possible, it at best implies that such faith is possible for humans in rare circumstances where there is immediate and overwhelming miraculous evidence of an evangelist's divine mission, leaving the above objection to evidentialist reading of Thomas unscathed.

[104] Penelhulm, "Analysis of Faith", 43; cf. Wood, "Faith's Intellectual Rewards", 36.
[105] Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 170-2.
[106] STIa.64.1.
[107] *DV* 14.9 ad4.

Jenkins mounts another objection to evidentialist readings of Aquinas based on the gracious nature of faith.[108] According to Thomas, faith is not merely certain, but even more certain than natural acts of *intellectus* or *scientia*.[109] Yet as Jenkins contends, it is hard to see how any natural cognition could be more certain than these paradigm examples of natural knowledge. Indeed, Aquinas seems to hold that it is the presence of the *lumen fidei* that makes possible the act of faith and its proper certainty. Yet since external signs are apparently knowable by natural reason, evidential arguments for the credibility of revelation will not exceed the certainty of conclusions attainable by natural reason.

The objection that faith is essentially gracious, however, may not be fatal to more nuanced evidentialist readings of Aquinas. In illustration, it will be helpful to briefly explore some "evidentialist" readings of Thomas given by Neo-Scholastics who stress the necessary role of both grace and evidence in causing and rendering rational the act of faith.[110] Ambrose Gardeil, for example, is typical among his contemporaries in affirming that appreciation of the signs that God is speaking through the Church should form part of a rational journey to faith on the part of intelligent adults. [111] However, as Pierre Rousselot points out, this does not mean that Gardeil and others deny a necessary role for grace in the genesis of faith.[112] Following late Scholastic authors such as Suarez, Gardeil envisages a natural judgement of credibility (i.e. that this dogma *can* be rationally believed on divine testimony), which is based on appreciation of evidence, *preceding* the act of faith proper. Between this and the act of faith stood a supernatural judgement of credentity (i.e. that this dogma *ought* to be believed), meaning that grace is necessary alongside the natural perception of miracles in the process of coming to faith. Once-popular analyses of this variety, therefore, are not vulnerable to the first of the two objections above.

---

[108] Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 167.
[109] *SSS*I.*prol*.q1a3sol.3.; *DV*14.1 ad7.
[110] Not *all* Neo-Scholastics maintained this careful balance. Louis Cardinal Billot, for example, argued that an acquired faith based on evidence was rationally and psychologically necessary. Billot reserved the role of grace to that of elevating the natural act of faith so that whilst still believing that God is speaking through the Church on the basis of evidence, the believer gladly assents to divine revelation out of pious respect for God (as a child trusts its parents) and not merely through natural knowledge that He cannot deceive. Cf. Dulles, *Assurance*, 106-8; Lamont, *Divine Faith*, 196-7.
[111] Cf. Dulles, *Assurance of Things Hoped For*, 106-7. Pierre Rousselot (James Donceel trans.), *The Eyes of Faith* (New York: Fordham UP, 1990), 39 n5.
[112] Ibid., 23.

A similar Neo-Scholastic reading of Aquinas which remains "evidentialist" is provided by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, which Brent explores.[113] On this account, the habit of divine faith is, as on CRE, a basic belief-forming procedure. Once infused with divine faith the believer does not believe doctrine in virtue of evidence for the proposition that God has revealed it, but simply believes that God has revealed a proposition and the proposition itself in the same act of faith.[114] Garrigou-Lagrange thus explicitly rejects certain late scholastic analyses of faith which make the act of faith itself the conclusion of a syllogism where acceptance of one of the premises (that God has revealed some doctrine) is based on the evidence of miracles.[115] However, prior to the initial act of divine faith, Garrigou-Lagrange posits a complicated process of natural consideration as to the rationality of faith which serves to prepare the believer for the act.[116] An important part of this scheme is a natural judgement of credibility, which for educated adults is based on an appraisal of the evidence of signs. There follows a judgement of credentity, which as with Gardeil is supernatural and based on an infused *instinctus fidei* which imbues a connatural appreciation of the fittingness of believing to attain eternal life. Importantly, Garrigou-Lagrange insists on the necessity of this natural judgement of credibility for the genesis of faith to be rational: even children or the uneducated are supposed to make *some* positive judgement concerning the rational credibility of doctrine prior to faith, although they may receive supernatural help to this end. As always, Garrigou-Lagrange appeals to the teaching of Aquinas, citing STIIaIIaeI.a4ad2.[117]

This position on the relationship between faith and reason remains evidentialist, insofar as it makes the rationality of faith (at least, in its genesis) dependent on the believer perceiving evidence that God speaks through the Church. Yet it is not vulnerable to the objections above concerning the gracious nature of faith. As to the first objection that the act of faith is essentially supernatural and transcends the natural powers of reason, Garrigou-Lagrange explicitly accepts this by denying that the judgement of credibility enters into or directly grounds the act of faith. Rather, it is simply part of a process

[113] Brent, "Epistemic Status", 133ff.
[114] Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Theological Virtues: Volume One: On Faith. A Commentary on St.Thomas' Theological Summa IaIIae qq.62,65,68: IIaIIae qq.1-16*. (St Louis: Herder, 1965), 75.
[115] *Ibid.*, 52-3; 70.
[116] *Ibid.*, 181-185.
[117] *Ibid.* 170.

culminating in divine faith. Secondly, as to the strength of faith exceeding the certainty attainable by a natural evaluation of the evidence in favour of revelation, Garrigou-Lagrange explicitly accepts this as reason to reject accounts on which the judgement of credibility is part of the act of faith.[118] More telling objections, therefore, are needed to overcome subtle evidentialist readings of Aquinas.

This is not to affirm that Neo-Scholastic readings of Aquinas are satisfactory. I shortly show that Aquinas rejects the need for even a preliminary judgement of credibility to be made on the basis of "signs". Even without this difficulty, however, the Neo-Thomists are guilty of importing distinctions made by later Scholastic writers into Thomas' thought. Aquinas himself nowhere explicitly discusses judgements of credibility/credentity. As I suggest below, when Aquinas writes that the "inner instinct" and "light of faith" make the believer see that the articles of faith are "to be believed", he does not clearly distinguish between the perception that it is pragmatically appropriate to believe, and that belief is fitting as a means of learning the truth.

An alternative exegesis of the Angelic Doctor is offered in the work of Rousselot himself. As Etienne Veto notes,[119] Rousselot draws heavily on Aquinas in his analysis of faith, and suggests that he developed his position by reading Thomas faithfully.[120] Rousselot's theory was prompted, however, by dissatisfaction with prevailing Neo-Scholastic religious epistemologies, which allowed for a "natural" faith based on natural judgements of credibility and credentity. Rousselot notes that his contemporaries were forced to contrive neat distinctions between gracious and natural elements in the genesis of faith to account for two competing *desiderata* for Catholic models of faith. On the one hand, faith is supposed to be universally *rational*, and therefore to have public evidence in its favour, leading to an emphasis on the existence of evidence for divine revelation appreciable by a natural judgement of credibility. On the other hand, faith is supposed to be certain. But the evidence which enters into such a judgement seems only *probable* in force, particularly that evidence relied upon by uneducated believers, leading to the positing of gracious "helps" (*suppléances*) to faith. Rousselot,

[118] *Ibid.* 70.
[119] Etienne Veto, "Rousselot and Thomas Aquinas: The Eyes of Faith as a Model of "Suntheologein"", *Gregorianum* 96 (4) (2015), 709-32.
[120] Rousselot, *Eyes of Faith*, 98-9.

however, finds such suppositions *ad hoc* and psychologically incredible.[121] He poses a "Great Pumpkin" objection to these accounts, alleging that if simple Christians can have (internalist) justification for their beliefs on this model, non-Christians might have similar (internalist) justification.[122]

Rousselot therefore proposes that rather than seeing grace as a peripheral late-comer to the formation of faith, it is to be envisaged (following Thomas) as a *light*: an intellectual capability which allows the believer to spontaneously see the value of the evidence- itself naturally perceptible-that God reveals Himself through the Church. This supernatural light is necessary for any judgement of credibility, as is the perception of some "evidence", the force of which the light makes evident. Indeed, this light enables the believer to perceive the force of the evidence as far stronger than it will appear to non-believers. With his model, then, Rousselot aims to guarantee the rationality of faith alongside its certainty, even in the case of simple believers who might appear to have inadequate grounds for firm belief.[123] This means that again, insofar as Rousselot's model resembles that of Aquinas, a reading of the latter can be offered which is evidentialist yet which still renders faith essentially supernatural.

Veto suggests that although Rousselot's position was immediately criticised as exegesis of Thomas, it bears similarities to Aquinas' religious epistemology. For example, Veto seconds Rousselot's contention that Aquinas emphasises the supernatural nature of faith in humans, rebutting the arguments of those who point to the faith of demons as an exception.[124] Moreover, Veto argues that Rousselot's presentation of the "light" of faith as a synthetic mental faculty which produces a judgement of credibility without presenting new "evidence" to the believer is a plausible reading of Aquinas,[125] citing e.g. Thomas' explanation of the *lumen fidei* as producing co-natural knowledge of credibility.[126] However, José de Wolf raises powerful objections against Rousselot's reading of

[121] *Ibid.*, 94.
[122] *Ibid.*, 24-5.
[123] In his second essay, Rousselot also tries to account for the freedom of faith by alleging that rather as the *lumen* and evidence are inseparable, so too the decision to believe is always accompanied- at the same instant- by a perception of evidence through the *lumen*, such that faith is never a matter of irrational choice.
[124] Veto, "Rousselot and Thomas", 713-5.
[125] Veto, "Rousselot and Thomas", 716-7.
[126] STIIaIIae1.4ad3.

Aquinas.[127] Thomas himself envisages the "interior" grounds for belief which God infuses as something *additional to* external evidence which induces one to assent to the gospel.[128] For example, in STIIaIIae2.9ad3, Aquinas refers to the interior instinct as something "*quod est plus*" over and against the evidence of "signs". Further, Wolf suggests that Rousselot follows De Lugo in making the act of faith "discursive" by introducing the believer's perception of motives of credibility into the act of faith itself- a position rejected by later Thomists.[129] Finally, as Aubert suggests,[130] it is plausible that Thomas envisaged the possibility of "natural faith", as perhaps illustrated in the mention of those who would naturally come to believe in prophecy if they witnessed a resurrection performed by the prophet.[131] Certainly, Aquinas acknowledge the existence of levels of certainty weaker than that of scientific demonstration, and so there seems little reason that he could not allow that humans are capable, on the basis of natural reasoning about "signs", from reaching probable certainty that the Church is a locus of divine revelation. [132]

In conclusion, the objection that evidentialist readings of Aquinas fail to account for the certain and gracious nature of faith carries some weight. However, Neo-Scholastic scholarship shows that readings of Aquinas can be given which retain evidentialist strictures on coming to faith whilst maintaining its gratuity and certainty. Whilst all such interpretations are not equally plausible given Aquinas' wider commitments, they suggest that further arguments need to be offered to demonstrate Aquinas' rejection of evidentialism.

3.2.2 Faith and *Scientia Divina*

Another common argument against evidentialist readings of Aquinas appeals to the analogies which Aquinas makes between faith (or the science of *sacra doctrina* which has the articles of faith as first

[127] José de Wolf, *La Justification de le Foi chez Saint Thomas d'Aquin et le Père Rousselot* (Brussels: Edition Universelle, 1946).
[128] *Ibid*. 67-89.
[129] *Ibid*. 96.
[130] Aubert, *Le Problème*, 70.
[131] STIIaIIae5.2 *resp*. This text is difficult to interpret since as I have noted, Aquinas is discussing the faith of demons in this passage, which he characterises as produced by evidence so convincing that the will cannot but assent in contrast to the faith of most humans.
[132] Cf. STIIaIIae70.2 *resp* ; Thomas can also call such probable certainty "opinion fortified by argument"- cf. *SSS*. I Pr. 1.3 ad3.

principles) and the first principles of other sciences. As Jenkins notes, in STIa.I.8 *resp*., Aquinas discusses whether *sacra doctrina* is a matter of argument. [133] In doing so, he suggests that just as with other sciences, *sacra doctrina* does not seek to demonstrate its own principles (i.e. the articles of faith) to wholescale sceptics. *Sacra doctrina* assumes the articles are true, and proceeds to show the connections between them to more accommodating sceptics who accept some articles of the creed or passages of Scripture.[134] Moreover, Thomas states that since *sacra doctrina* does not depend on any secular science for proof of its principles (as physics depends on mathematics), there is *no* way to prove the articles of faith to those who entirely reject the authority of Scripture and the Creeds.[135] Rather, all that the Christian can do for such a sceptic is to respond to her objections to the faith, showing that they are not probative demonstrations (though *SCG* I.7 seems to imply that such objections might constitute "probable" arguments against Christianity).[136] As Richard Cross observes,[137] this a sentiment that Aquinas echoes elsewhere, stating that, "The reasons which are brought forward in support of the authority of faith, are not demonstrations which can bring intellectual vision to the human intellect, wherefore they do not cease to be unseen. But they remove obstacles to faith, by showing that what faith proposes is not impossible".[138] Yet as Cross implies, it is hard to square the evidentialist reading of Aquinas' religious epistemology with this position that the "arguments" which can be presented in favour of the faith are merely useful for demonstrating the bare credibility of articles of faith as logically possible propositions. On the "evidentialist" view, since faith is rationally grounded in "reasons" for belief provided by signs, an appeal to the evidence of

[133] Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 169.
[134] "As other sciences do not argue in proof of their principles, but argue from their principles to demonstrate other truths in these sciences: so this doctrine does not argue in proof of its principles, which are the articles of faith, but from them it goes on to prove something else".
[135] "Hence Sacred Scripture, since it has no science above itself, can dispute with one who denies its principles only if the opponent admits some at least of the truths obtained through divine revelation".
[136] "*Unde nec demonstrationis vim habent, sed vel sunt rationes probabiles vel sophisticae. Et sic ad ea solvenda locus relinquitur*."
[137] Cross, "Testimony", 10.
[138] STIIaIIae2.10ad2.

miracles would be appropriate when propounding the faith, as Gilson assumes when outlining Thomas' position.[139]

Aquinas elsewhere makes clear that an important reason that the faith is not to be justified to non-believers on the basis of demonstrations starting with truths evident to natural reason is that no such demonstrations can be given, as even angels lack demonstrative knowledge of the articles of faith.[140] Urging conversion on the basis of reasons which are therefore necessarily defective demonstrations may lead an enquirer to the misunderstanding that faith is irrationally based upon false reasoning.[141] It is consistent with this worry, however, that Aquinas would not counsel against the apologetic use of evidence which falls short of demonstration, including that provided by miracles. Indeed, Thomas uses such an apologetic strategy in *SCG*.[142] Of particular note is *SCG* I.9, where Aquinas writes that since defending the faith with demonstrations is imprudent, "*[s]ingularis vero modus convincendi adversarium contra huiusmodi veritatem est ex auctoritate Scripturae divinitus confirmata miraculis"*.[143] The reference to miracles here indicates that Aquinas specifically countenances the use of evidence in an apologetic context, as he has just done in *SCG* I.6.

Additionally, it is notable that when in STIIaIIae2.10ad2 Aquinas asserts that arguments only show that Christianity is "not impossible", he explicitly refers to *rationes* given in support of faith as not being demonstrative in character. It is likely that Aquinas only has in mind *rationes* which refute logical objections to Christian doctrine, rather than *rationes probabili* which provide evidence for the authority of Christ and the Church; throughout STIIaIIae2.10, the term "*rationes*" seems to apply to logical rather than probable proofs. Even if we take this text to include a reference to *rationes probabili*, however, there is a sense in which the evidence of miracles might refute an argument that

[139] Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (London: V. Gollancz, 1957), 20 - "We can, as it were, lead our adversaries by the hand into the presence of these inaccessible truths. We can point out the probable reasons and the sure authority upon which they are based".
[140] *De Rationibus Fidei* 2.
[141] STIa.32.1, Ia.46.2 *resp*; *SCG* I.9.
[142] Traditionally, it was believed that *SCG* was written as an apologetic work aimed at an Iberian Jewish/Muslim audience. Brian Davies, *Thomas Aquinas' Summa Contra Gentiles: A Guide and Commentary* (New York: OUP, 2016), 9-13 challenges this view, but suggests that Aquinas is nevertheless writing to illustrate and defend the rationality of Christianity from the perspective of natural reason.
[143] "Indeed, the sole means of overcoming an adversary of this kind of truth is by the authority of Scripture, [which is] divinely confirmed by miracles." (My translation).

Christianity is impossible: by showing that Christianity does not require assenting to religious truth which is incredible by the standards of natural reason, since it lacks expected miraculous indications of divine origin.[144] Thus, Aquinas' claim that arguments supporting Christianity merely show that it is not impossible need not be incompatible with an evidentialist reading of Aquinas.

More promising evidence for a "Reformed" reading of Aquinas is the underlying comparison which he draws between the manner in which articles of faith are believed and the manner in which first principles are known immediately through the *lumen naturale*. Aquinas makes this comparison explicit throughout his works. In his Commentary on the Sentences, Aquinas is most forceful, writing that *sacra doctrina* "has for its first principles the articles of faith, which the person who has faith knows *per se* by the infused light of faith, just as principles naturally implanted in us are known by the light of the agent intellect".[145] Aquinas soon disavowed the position that the truths of faith are known *per se* as incompatible with the distinction between faith and vision.[146] Yet he continued to emphasise the similarity between non-inferential assent to first principles and a believer's assent to doctrine. In *De Boe. In Trin.*, Aquinas writes that "Thus the truths that we hold on faith are, as it were, our principles in this science, and the other become, as it were, our conclusions".[147] This comparison with non-inferential assent to first principles is doubly difficult to square with evidentialist interpretations of Aquinas. Firstly, cuts against the implication of the texts cited above which apparently claim that the assent of faith is caused by the evaluation of evidence attesting to divine revelation. Secondly, Aquinas clearly does not believe that the basic belief in first principles is an instance of cognitive failure or irrationality. Perhaps, therefore, the truths of faith might likewise be basically believed and similarly rational.

Some discussion of the "light of faith" might help to clarify this comparison. Just as the "light of natural reason" is the cognitive mechanism which (reliably) produces knowledge of first principles when appropriately triggered by sense-perception, so the *lumen fidei* is said to produce immediate

[144] See SCG I.6; STIIaIIae2.9 ad3 quoted above.
[145] *SSS* I q.1art.3qc2ad2 (Marshall trans.).
[146] *Boe.* q.2a.2ad5.
[147] *Ibid*. q2a2 *resp*. Cf. *DV* 28.a4ad8; STIIaIIae I.7 *resp*

assent to the truths of faith. Aquinas asserts that "as cognition of first principles is received by way of sense experience, and yet the light by which those principles are known is innate, so faith comes by way of hearing, and yet the habit of faith is infused".[148] Further, the light of faith makes the believer aware that the articles of faith *ought* to be believed: that is, that they are fitting and suitable for belief.[149] Yet this awareness is likewise non-inferential. It is an instance of connatural knowledge. Aquinas cites the example of someone who has a reliable grasp of moral obligations, but lacks detailed knowledge of moral philosophy. If this person is virtuous and so habituated to making correct moral decisions, she need not engage in discursive reasoning as to the morality of actions which she considers to grasp-"instinctively"- that an action is im/moral. Similarly, Aquinas claims,[150] a person infused with the light of faith non-inferentially grasps the propriety of believing.[151] Again, this seems difficult to square with an evidentialist view which claims that the assent of faith is irrational unless caused by the perception of evidence.

The defender of Garrigou-Lagrange's position can answer part of the objection raised here. On his position, the assent of divine faith is ultimately non-inferential, although preceded by a chain of reasoning that is partly inferential. Moreover, insofar as the "judgement of credentity" is infused and connatural, Garrigou-Lagrange will be able to account for Aquinas' thoughts on the *lumen fidei*. However, the question remains: if the assent to principles *per se nota* can be properly basic, why not also assent to propositions believed by faith?

3.2.3 Aquinas on Basic Belief

Despite the texts above which seem to show that Aquinas makes perception of evidence a necessary precondition of rational faith, there are passages which indicate the opposite. The most famous text

[148] *Boe.* 2.q.3q.1ad4.
[149] STIIaIIae1.5 ad1.
[150] Cf. STIIaIIae2.3 ad 2.
[151] Stump ("Faith, Wisdom", 212-16) further notes that some of the connatural knowledge which enables believers to persevere in their faith is brought about by the existence of *charity* in the believer which is the root of a shared perspective with God. When one possesses the virtue of wisdom (*sapientia*), one is shaped by a shared experience of loving and valuing what God loves and values, which enables a correct intuitive judgement about divine revelation (STIIaIIae45.2). This gives one an ability to "empathise" with God, and hence to recognise his revelation in a manner similar in that to which empathy facilitates an understanding of another human's emotions.

occurs late in Aquinas' career. In *Qdl*. IIq.4a.1, Aquinas considers whether people would have been obliged to believe Christ if He had not performed miracles, and upholds this position. He writes (arg. 3): *"Magis obligantur homines ad credendum primae veritati quam ad credendum visibilibus signis. Sed licet Christus miracula non fecisset, ipse tamen verus Deus existens, prima veritas erat. Ergo etiam si miracula non fecisset, adhuc erat ei credendum."*[152] In his *responsio,* Aquinas states that, as outlined above, God must help humans to faith, since it exceeds our natural powers. God, helps humans to faith in three ways: by an "interior call" (*per interiorem vocationem*), through preaching and teaching (*per praedicationem et doctrinam exteriorem*) and by miracles. Even if Christ did not perform miracles, therefore, he should still have been believed on account of his teaching and crucially the "interior call/instinct" which invites belief in those who hear Christ outwardly, which "*pertinet ad virtutem primae veritatis, quae interius hominem illuminat et docet*" (*Ibid.* ad3).

A similar position is apparent throughout Aquinas' later works. In ST IIaIIae 10.1.ad1, Aquinas maintains that humans are obliged to believe in virtue of *both* their inner instinct and outward preaching. Famously, as Plantinga notes, in STIIaIIae2.9.ad3 Thomas appeals to both miracles and the inner instinct to believe as providing sufficient motive for faith to be rational, and seems to maintain that the inner instinct is of greater significance.[153] Most clearly, in STIaIIae 68.1 *resp,* Thomas quotes Aristotle (*Eud. Ethics* VII.8): "for those who are moved by Divine instinct, there is no need to take counsel according to human reason, but only to follow their inner promptings, since they are moved by a principle higher than human reason." Aquinas makes a similar point in his Johannine Commentary (C. 15 L5), where in commenting on Christ's statements that the Jews would lack the sin of unbelief if he had not preached to them and worked miracles (vv.23-4), he maintains that even in the absence of miracles, the Jews would still have been obliged to believe in virtue of an inner calling corresponding to the exterior call to faith. For those with an "inner calling", therefore, faith is rational and even obligatory.

[152] "Humans are more obliged to believe First Truth than to believe visible signs. But even if Christ had not performed miracles, being nevertheless True God, he would still have been First Truth. Therefore even if he had not performed miracles, he still ought to have been believed." (My translation).
[153] "*[I]nducitur enim auctoritate divinae doctrinae miraculis confirmatae, et, quod plus est, interiori instinctu Dei invitantis*".

Aquinas does not merely note that it is *possible* to believe without considering the evidence of miracles. Rather, as Brent notes,[154] he implies that it is commendable to do so, particularly in the case of believers. Hence, in *In Jn* 16 Lec 7, Aquinas contrasts the motives which unbelievers and believers should have for assenting to faith. Whereas unbelievers can fittingly be led to faith by miracles (cf. 1 Cor. 14:22), "[b]elievers, on the other hand, should be led and directed to faith by the authority of Scripture, to which they are bound to assent", and are blameworthy if they only believe because of miracles. Commenting on 1 Cor. 14:22 itself, Aquinas writes: "it is clearly evident that the gift of tongues was given 'not for believers' to bring them to belief because they already believe [cf. John 4.42] 'but to unbelievers' to be converted".[155] Believers who assent on the basis of the "revelation and prophecy of hidden things" are said to be more "commendable" and "spiritual" than those who only believe due to sensory perception of miracles (*In Jn* C2 Lec 3).

Moreover, Aquinas contends that even for those coming to faith, it is better to believe without the evidence of signs.[156] In *In Jn* 4 C4 Lec 5, Aquinas praises the faith of Samaritans who believe merely on the basis of hearing divine testimony. Similarly, in STIIIa.55a5ad3, Aquinas compares those who believe only on the basis of signs and those who are prepared to believe nevertheless, concluding that "they who are so ready to believe God, even without beholding signs, are blessed in comparison with them who do not believe except they see the like". Indeed, conversions based on signs are compatible with hesitation, and may be broken off.[157] In light of this evidence, it seems that Neo-Thomists had things backwards. Rather than maintaining that it is epistemically irresponsible for a believer to be led to faith without external evidence of divine revelation, a judgement of credibility which does not rest upon evidence of sort acceptable to classical foundationalism is rational and spiritually praiseworthy for Aquinas.

[154] Brent, "Epistemic Status", 117.
[155] *In I Cor*. C14 Lec 4 v22.
[156] See also STIIIa.43.1ad3; STIIaIIae.2.10 *resp*.
[157] Cf. *In Jn* C9 Lec 2 v16.

3.2.4 Re-assessing Evidentialist Passages

Given the foregoing arguments, there are strong reasons to believe that Aquinas cannot, on pain of explicit inconsistency, have held the view that faith must be rationally grounded in the appreciation of "signs" as evidence for divine revelation. Even the position that a judgement of credibility made on the basis of such evidence is necessary for the rational preparation of an individual to accept divine faith seems ruled out. Yet what of the texts cited above which seemed to weigh in favour of an evidentialist interpretation?

A Reformed reading of Aquinas does not need to dispute the claim of texts which merely state that the veracity of revelation is "confirmed" by signs. Rather, Reformed Epistemologists merely argue that faith need not be grounded in evidence acceptable to classical foundationalists. Yet this leaves the greatest difficulty for the Reformed reading, which is with those texts indicating that faith *must* be rationally grounded in such evidence. Happily, there are several explanations of these passages which do not render Aquinas an evidentialist. Firstly, Thomas comes close to explaining such passages when he maintains that faith would be obligatory even in the absence of signs. In *Quodl.* 2.4.a1ad2, Aquinas addresses the objection that, following John 15:24, non-believers would only be obliged to convert if they witnessed "works" performed by Christ. In reply, Thomas suggests that both the interior attraction wrought by Christ and His outward preaching are to be numbered among Christ's "works". Aquinas makes a similar point in commenting on John 15:24 itself, concluding that "it is now clear how they could have been excused, that is, if he had not accomplished miraculous works [i.e. including a *vocatio interior*] among them".[158] Aquinas explicitly uses the terms "miracles" and "signs" in this passage to refer to the interior instinct. If Aquinas can refer to the inner calling as a miracle, then it is not obvious that he means to exclude such a calling from the signs and miracles he claims to be "necessary" for the rational acceptance of faith. This is particularly obvious in STIIaIIae 1a4ad2, where he stipulates that "signs, or something similar" are indispensable for the believer. One might wonder why Aquinas does not make his intention here more obvious, particularly in *SCG* I,6 and III,154 where he lists examples of "signs" without mentioning "interior" miracles other than

[158] *In Jn* C15 Lec 5.

indirectly by reference to the quasi-miraculous conversion of the world. Yet given Aquinas' purpose in *SCG* (i.e. of showing the consonance between faith and natural reason), it may have been dialectically inappropriate to introduce reference to a gracious interior call which can be reckoned as "madness" to external observers.[159]

Moreover, is noteworthy that the word "necessity" can have multiple meanings for Aquinas in the context of explaining divine action. Divine action *ad extra* is never metaphysically necessary since God need not create anything,[160] but may be necessary *to attain an end*, either absolutely or in an attenuated sense as the most practical or fitting way for God to achieve his freely chosen purposes for creation.[161] Aquinas envisages that the necessity of miracles for belief is indicated by Scripture (Mark 16:20). Yet as we have seen above, Aquinas believes that many people struggle to come to faith only by the prompting of an interior call. A good explanation of Aquinas' language of *necessity* surrounding the performance of miracles is that it just means it is either absolutely necessary (or merely "fitting") in order to produce a large number of new converts, rather than because faith would otherwise be irrational. Thus in the *Catena Aurea*, when commenting on Mark 16:17, Aquinas approvingly quotes Gregory to the effect that miracles were necessary in the Early Church for the spread of Christianity. That miracles are particularly suited and intended to convert non-believers is also evident from Aquinas' use of and commentary on 1 Cor. 14.22.[162] Moreover, there are further benefits to Christ having performed miracles, such as the strengthening of believers' faith, and increased opportunity for present-day conversions. In short, given both these suggestions as to Aquinas' meaning in the problematic passages, there is no reason to suppose that Aquinas is inconsistent in his views on the rational grounding of faith.

[159] Cf. *In Div Nom* C7 Lec5.
[160] STIa25.5.
[161] Cf. ST. STIII.I.a2*resp*, where the Incarnation is necessary to attain our redemption not absolutely as human require food to survive, but only insofar attains the end "better and more conveniently, as a horse is necessary for a journey".
[162] Cf. *In I. Cor*. C 14 Lec. 4 v22.

4.0 Aquinas' Religious Epistemology

I have argued above that according to Aquinas, the assent of believers to articles of faith should not to be rationally grounded in the evidence for revelation provided by external "signs". For those presented with an inner calling or who possess the "light of faith", this calling/light alone is enough to rationally ground assent to revelation. Still, this leaves several questions open. Firstly, what is the relationship between this "instinct" and the "light" of faith? Secondly, can any description be given of the basic belief generated by the instinct or light? How does this basic belief interact with the will which Aquinas insists must be engaged in the act of faith? And finally, in light of this, what sense can Aquinas' account explain how faith is rational?

4.1 Aquinas on the Interior Instinct

On Aquinas' account that the instinct of faith is an infused cognitive/volitional mechanism which produces a disposition to believe the articles of faith proposed by a preacher of the gospel.[163] The term "instinct" is in this case practically synonymous with the terms *vocatio*[164] and *inclinatio*,[165]and refers to what Brent terms "an interior principle of an appetitive instinct or movement".[166] As explained above, Aquinas' action theory supposes that God orientates the human will in a broad direction to desire what it perceives as good. Precisely which objects or action someone wills is usually determined by what the intellect perceives as means to the good. However, Thomas further maintains that in the case of the will to accept grace, a particular will to do so is immediately infused by God.[167] It should, moreover, be noted that Aquinas likely implies that the inclination to believe generated by this instinct is something of which humans are *conscious*. This is probable given his parallel use of "instinct" in describing the "estimative power" of animals.[168] On Aquinas' animal psychology, more intelligent animals are aware of "*intentiones non sentatae*"- i.e. objections of perception not derived from sense-data. Thus, for example, sheep can know upon seeing a wolf that it

[163] Comparable to the light of faith which makes a believer see that the articles of faith "ought to be believed" (cf. STIIaIIae1.5 ad1).
[164] Cf. *In Rom* C1 L4; C8 L6; *In Matt*. C4 L2.
[165] *In Rom*.C10 L2.
[166] Brent, "Epistemic Status", 230.
[167] STIa.9.6.ad3.
[168] STIa.78.4 *resp*.

is harmful, and should be fled from. This perception is not anything which can be abstracted from the visual appearance of a wolf, but arises spontaneously from the function of an "internal" sense (the "estimative power").[169] As explained above, the *instinctus fidei* produces its judgement that the articles are credible in a similar manner to the way in which the "light of faith" produces "connatural" knowledge that the articles of faith are to be believed.

An inclination to perceive the act of faith as appropriate should lead the intellect to recommend the act of faith as something good to the will, which in turn ought to elicit the choice to believe, as per my sketch of Aquinas' action theory above. Yet it is also clear that a virtuous person may choose to act against their instinctive and habitual knowledge of what ought to be done. This might happen because her intellect malfunctions to present some other incompatible choice as good, or else because she fails to apply her general notion that such-and-such an action is appropriate to her case. Likewise, the instinct to believe is also resistible through a sinful will to disbelieve.

Aquinas does, however, appear to envisage a difference between the "interior instinct" and the light of faith, as is clear from *In Jn* C6 L4, where Aquinas asserts that in addition to the habit of faith, God infuses an interior instinct to believe. Perhaps one might understand the difference as being between a stable disposition to an act of faith and an initial tentative disposition to believe.

4.2 Non-Evidentialist Interpretations of Aquinas's Psychology of Belief

4.2.1 Ross and Stump

Having sketched answers to these questions, it will be helpful to review some accounts of Aquinas' religious epistemology given by modern commentators who reject the "evidentialist" reading of Thomas. One account is provided by Ross and Stump. These authors stress the importance of the *will* for the rationality of the act of faith. They suggest that since the intellect is not compelled to give assent to the truth of faith since because evidence for divine revelation is not unambiguous, it is purely the desire for beatitude that leads the believer to assent with certainty. Assent grounded in desire for beatitude, however, is not an irrational instance of wishful belief, because in this case belief

[169] STIa.78.4 *resp.*

on the basis of desire meets reliabilist criteria for epistemic justification. To demonstrate this, Ross stresses that on Aquinas' account, the existence of God ensures that our cognitive faculties are constituted so that their proper function in our environment yield knowledge.[170] Alternatively, Stump appeals to the convertibility of goodness and being in Aquinas' metaphysics to show that faith in God's existence based on a desire for beatitude will be a reliably truth-directed belief forming procedure.[171] Since God's unlimited Being (which renders His existence necessary) is identical to His Goodness which makes Him infinitely desirable, forming the belief that God exists on the basis that this state of affairs is desirable is reliably truth-directed, because God's very desirability entails His existence. Although Stump and Ross do not discuss the nature of "instinct" or the "light of faith" in detail, on their construal perhaps the instinct to believe would just be the perception that faith is beneficial for the believer, as a means to beatitude.

There are problems with this presentation of Aquinas' position. Although Aquinas claims that the desire for beatitude motivates the will to believe in *De Veritate*, his later use of the term "instinct" and illustration of the "connatural" knowledge imbued by the light of faith does not square well with the notion that the gospel is explicitly found desirable *as a means to beatitude*. Rather, the comparisons with animals forming an instinct to flee or virtuous people with a connatural knowledge of ethics suggest that someone drawn by the instinct to believe simply sees that the propositions of faith are fit to be believed, without necessarily reflecting explicitly on the prospective benefits of faith. Moreover, Stump's particular suggestion for the reliability of forming Christian beliefs on the basis that they are desirable is flawed. As Jenkins argues, even if God exists necessarily given His nature, Thomas does not believe that the divine actions towards creatures affirmed in the articles of faith are likewise metaphysically necessary, although one might add that they can be necessary (often, merely *ex convenientia*) to obtain God's freely chosen ends.[172] Accordingly, God's gracious actions are not necessary even though they are intrinsically desirable for creatures. Even if certain divine actions are necessitated or rendered probable by God's previous choices, these choices themselves are contingent.

[170] Ross, "Aquinas on Belief and Knowledge), 250.
[171] Stump, *Aquinas*, 367-70.
[172] Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 185.

Saliently for Christian faith, God could have chosen not to bestow on humanity a supernatural end, even if given this together with God's decision to save us, the Incarnation and passion of Jesus Christ was highly expedient. Thus the formation of religious beliefs in view of their desirability will not be reliably truth-tracking given Aquinas' metaphysical presumptions.

4.2.2 Jenkins

Another interpretation is given by Jenkins. According to Jenkins, it is particular gifts of the Holy Spirit which God infuses which enable the believer to non-inferentially discern that the articles of faith are to be believed. Jenkins maintains that according to Thomas' mature thought in *ST*, the virtue of faith itself is not a stable disposition to assent to revelation.[173] Rather, the stable disposition is infused with the gifts of the *donum intellectus* and the *donum scientiae.*[174] The former gift yields basic belief that propositions of faith are to be believed, and the latter infuses an immediate act of assent to believe, providing the will co-operates.[175] Jenkins is less keen to affirm a positive role for the will in his analysis of faith than Stump and Ross.[176] On his interpretation, the infusion of the *donum scientiae* produces the assent of faith automatically, rather as the light of natural reason produces *intellectus* about the essences of sensory objects under appropriate circumstances. The ability of someone to resist this infusion of grace only occurs in virtue of their previous poor moral decisions which foster vices such as pride and intellectual arrogance. Such vices may incline someone to resist the intellectual pull to an act of faith fostered by the infused gifts. Unless one has fostered such vices, the disposition to believe will presumably be automatically triggered when one who possesses the gifts is presented with an opportunity to believe.

However, as Brent and Lamont argue, this exegesis is problematic. [177] Firstly, it appears unlikely that the gifts of the Holy Spirit move people to faith, since they seem to presuppose the presence of grace and hence the theological virtues in their recipient. [178] Thus Aquinas rules out the possibility of the

[173] Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 187.
[174] STIIaIIae8; 9.
[175] Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 193-7.
[176] *Ibid.*, 202-10.
[177] Lamont, *Divine Faith*, 71-2.
[178] STIaIIae68.4.ad3.

donum intellectus existing without grace. Rather, the gift of understanding "respond[s] to the virtue of faith".[179] Moreover, one might wonder whether Jenkins has correctly construed Aquinas' treatment of the gifts of understanding and knowledge. Aquinas' clearest statements on the nature of the two gifts imply that the *donum intellectus* brings one to understand the contents of faith proposed for belief (so as to avoid, e.g. heretical misinterpretations of doctrine); [180] whereas the *donum scientiae* leads one to the intellectual judgement that the articles are to be believed.[181]

4.2.3 Brent

Brent, therefore, provides his own analysis of Aquinas' account of how people come to faith,[182] which combines the more plausible elements of the above analyses. The movement to faith requires both interior and exterior components.[183] Firstly, since faith is *"ex auditu*", the incipient believer must have the articles of faith proposed to her for belief by a preacher. At least in the case of Christian revelation, these articles will present "good news" for the hearer-i.e. she will naturally wish that they are true. But this is not sufficient to incline her to the act of faith.[184] Rather, a supernatural inclination disposing her to see that the articles of faith should be believed must be infused by God. Unless resisted, this inclination causes a judgement that one ought to believe, and in turn an act of faith follows. This act of faith simply consists in the affirmation (with perfect certainty and rational tenacity) that the articles of faith are true since they are revealed to God, and does not include any inference to this conclusion from the perception of evidence for divine revelation. God then infuses, with a person's co-operation over time, a stable disposition to make acts of faith, and this is the habit of faith, to which is joined the "light" of faith analogous to the connatural knowledge of virtue gained by those who possess moral virtues.

[179] STIIaIIae8.5.obj3.
[180] STIIaIIae8.6 *resp*; 8.7 *resp*.
[181] STIIaIIae 9.1 *resp*.
[182] Brent, "Epistemic Significance", 219-238.
[183] Cf. *In Rom* C10 L2: "It must be said, therefore, that two things are required for faith. One is the inclination of the heart to believe…[t]he other is a specification of what is to be believed, and this is from hearing".
[184] See above; STIIaIIae 6.1.

4.3 Aquinas' Model and CRE

In my judgement, Brent's exegesis of Aquinas' psychology of faith is accurate, and I do not wish to qualify it below beyond a more precise suggestion as to the phenomenology of the "instinct". At this point, therefore, it might be helpful to compare Aquinas' model of the rational genesis of religious belief to CRE. In my first chapter, I asserted that in an act of faith, a person engages in the basic (indeed, fundamental) belief-forming practice of believing in line with God's teaching as revealed through the Church. I claimed that since this practice is basic, the believer does not engage in this practice because of any exterior evidence for its reliability. Rather, she *chooses* to believe the practice because she possesses "impulsional evidence" inclining her to engage in it, or because she can see that the practice is self-confirming, as are many of the other basic doxastic practices which she engages in.

The similarity with Aquinas' account should be obvious. According to Aquinas, the most appropriate way to believe is simply because one sees through an infused instinct that it is fitting to engage in faith as a basic doxastic practice. Likewise, Aquinas explicitly claims that faith is an act of the will, and if I have interpreted him correctly the choice to believe is, like other choices, caused directly by an act of the will. In short, Aquinas' position is close to CRE.

4.4 Are "Signs" Necessary for Internal Justification?

However, despite careful exegesis, Brent reaches an unfortunate conclusion for Aquinas' analysis of faith. Brent suggests that Aquinas' religious epistemology only allows one to reach Christian beliefs which are justified in an externalist sense without knowledge of natural theology and the "signs" which constitute evidence of the gospel's divine origin. [185] On this view, shared Niedebacher, one important role for the "signs" provided by God to indicate the locus of revelation is to give the believer "internalist" justification for her beliefs (although Aquinas, blissfully unaware of modern debates on justification, may not have recognised the importance of this role himself). [186]

[185] Brent, *Epistemic Status*, 238-9.
[186] Niedebacher, "The Relation of Reason", 345.

Whilst I wish to affirm Brent's broad presentation of Aquinas' position on the grounding and formation of faith, in my view the position that for Aquinas belief without the perception of evidence in favour of the truth of revelation lacks "internalist" justification is mistaken for two reasons. Firstly, Thomas often considers the rationality of faith *from a position of faith*. Thus, for example, when claiming that faith is factive in STIIaIIae1.3, he does not merely stipulate that faith is factive by definition, but also assumes that the faith of the Catholic believers is a genuine instance of that virtue. In my first chapter (3.3), I suggested that one's beliefs may meet my negative "internalist" condition on justification if one can provide a circular argument that these beliefs have been produced by a reliably truth-directed cognitive faculty given that these beliefs are true. If this is so, then although other than via an appeal to "signs" Aquinas' religious epistemology lacks a non-circular argument for the reliably truth-directed nature of faith in propositions taught by God through the Church, this does not mean that on his account a believer who lacks knowledge of "signs" also lacks an important sort of "internalist" justification for her beliefs.[187]

Secondly, however, it is worth reflecting on the similarity between Aquinas' affirmation that an instinct justifies the assent of faith and the contemporary position known as "phenomenal conservatism" (PC) outlined in my first chapter. This position holds that an "appearance" that *p* provides *prima facie* justification for believing *p*. PC is an "internalist" theory of epistemic justification insofar as it posits that the grounds for rational belief (seemings) are "inside" a believer's mind and normally accessible via introspection. Yet this need not mean that proponents of PC support the contention attacked by Bergmann that justification always requires the awareness of how one's beliefs are justified. As outlined in the first chapter, there is some debate amongst phenomenal conservatives over the nature of "appearances", with some objecting to the idea that an "appearance" is a mere inclination to belief. One notable species of appearances discussed by phenomenal conservatives are "appearances that", which appear to be something like inclinations to be believe grounded in what Plantinga terms impulsional evidence. Such appearances, together with such an

[187] Since Aquinas obviously does not discuss "internalist" justification explicitly, the above is merely a suggestion for how his analysis of faith fairs vis-a-via justification rather than an imputation of this view to Aquinas himself.

inclination, will pass my own negative internalist requirement for internalist justification, and indeed some proponents of PC take it that only such appearances confer *prima facie* justification on a belief.[188]

Although Aquinas does not to my knowledge use the language of "appearance" in connection with the "instinct" of animals, his characterisation of these animals as possessing a basic perception that they ought to respond in particular ways to certain objects they encounter (e.g. that they ought to flee from predators), would naturally be described by phenomenal conservatives using the language of "appearance". It *seems* to sheep that wolves are dangerous. Just so, one might suspect that when Aquinas talks of an "instinct" to believe, he envisages that it will *seem* to one called to faith that the articles of faith are apt to be believed. The "appearance" which induces one to make an act of faith might well be grounded in "impulsional" evidence, comparable to that which yields basic belief in the "great things of the gospel" on Plantinga's account.[189] Still, one might suggest that this account will not yield, on PC, *prima facie* epistemic justification for belief in the articles of faith. In order to believe the articles with *epistemic* (as opposed to merely pragmatic) justification, it must seem not merely that one ought to believe the articles for some practical reason, but because one will (appropriately) form true beliefs by believing in the articles.[190] Is it, then, plausible to hold that rather than a mere appearance that it is in some way *good* to believe, the interior instinct causes the perception that the virtue of faith reliably yields true beliefs?

One might disregard this position on the grounds that Aquinas states that it is the *will* which assures the assent of faith and not the intellect. However, a strong role for the will in the act of faith is not obviously in tension with this interpretation of the "instinct" to believe. Recall that on PC, seemings are epistemically defeasible, and can often be ignored by one determined not to believe in line with them.[191] Moreover, it is interesting to note that Aquinas sometimes apparently ascribes the epistemic

[188] Cf. Trent Dougherty, "Faith, Trust and Testimony: An Evidentialist Account" in O'Callahan and O'Connor (ed.) *Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue*, 100-104.
[189] As noted above, therefore, I have not been claiming that Aquinas rules out the position that faith must be grounded evidence of any sort- as I suggest here, perhaps the *instinctus fidei* always bestows impulsional evidence that revelation is to be believed.
[190] Otherwise, it might appear that one is "guessing".
[191] Admittedly, seemings can be so strong that they automatically produce belief. Some such seemings probably give rise to what Aquinas terms *intellectus*.

force of the "interior instinct" to the truth-directed nature of the instinct. In *Quodl*. II.4.1, where Aquinas discusses the obligation to believe Christ without signs, he specifically points to Christ's divine nature which makes him the *prima veritas*[192] who teaches humans all truths.[193] On one reading of this text, Aquinas is merely explaining that following the infused instinct has impeccable justification in an "externalist" sense, rather than implying that the believer has any sense that Christ ought to be believed as first truth. But perhaps this reading would be in tension with Aquinas' wider views about the importance of conscience, which appear to include a commitment to the notion that one must choose the action one *perceives* to be moral- a matter about which one can be inculpably mistaken.[194] Unless the interior instinct is constituted by some awareness (e.g. a "seeming") that a preacher of the gospel is sent by God, it seems that a hearer could not be found guilty of choosing (*de dicto*) to disbelieve divine testimony. This argument is not decisive, though, because perhaps Aquinas merely means to say that one ought to believe just if it appears that such an action is morally appropriate, and that such a failure would be all the more unfortunate in the case where one fails on such grounds to believe an authority which is in fact (*de re*) reliable. And although Swinburne observes[195] that Aquinas believes that one must only believe for reasons perceived as appropriate by one's conscience,[196] as Brent suggests, this might simply mean that one must perceive the act of faith as a moral or practical good.[197] Indeed, when discussing the acceptability of faith upon human testimony, Aquinas follows Augustine in suggesting that such beliefs are necessary for practical and moral reasons.

There may be further evidence for the view that Aquinas believes that the "inner instinct" to faith generates an appearance that the preachers of the gospel are reliable conveyors of true information. Sometimes, Aquinas appears to imply that those who develop believe on the basis of this instinct are aware that their beliefs are truth-tracking. In commenting on the Samaritans who eventually believe

[192] Cf. *Qdl*. II.4.1 *sed contra;* ad3.
[193] For which, and the distinction between truths taught naturally and supernaturally, cf. STIaIIae109.1.
[194] STIaIIae 19.5.
[195] Swinburne, *Faith and Reason*, 135.
[196] *Ibid*. *resp*.
[197] Brent, "Epistemic Significance", 288.

on the basis of Jesus' own testimony in John 4,[198] Aquinas writes that after people have come to faith (say, on the basis of the "testimony of the law and the prophets", or the preaching of evangelists), they believe "because of the truth itself", which is the proper motive for belief. [199] It is clear from the context that Aquinas means this to be the fitting and *conscious* motive for believers. Admittedly, Aquinas may merely be affirming a commonplace in his religious epistemology: that faith necessarily involves the conscious assent to propositions in view of divine revelation.[200] However, it is noteworthy that Aquinas immediately moves on to discuss the commendable faith of the Samaritans who believed in Jesus' heavenly origin on the basis of His testimony without requiring the performance of miracles as evidence. If Aquinas views this latter group as experiencing a phenomenology at the inception of their faith comparable to that experienced by those who *eventually* believe solely on Christ's testimony, then it would seem that those who come to believe on the basis of Christ's preaching alone (at the instigation of an inner call) have a similar grasp that they are responding to the truth itself.

Further, Brent notes that a passage from Aquinas' commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius is perhaps the clearest description of the phenomenology of those who have the light of faith. Aquinas writes: "*He who by faith is united to the truth knows well how good it is for him to be united to the truth in such manner (sic)- even though many reprehend him as having gone out of his senses (extasis passim) and of being a fool and a madman. For truly it is hidden from those reprehending him for his errors that he has suffered an ecstasy of truth – as if placed beyond all sense knowledge and conjoined to supernatural Truth. The believer knows himself to be no fool, as they say, but to be liberated by the pure and unchangeable truth, and to be withdrawn from the unstable and changing current of error.*"[201] A plausible reading of this passage is that the believer not only perceives (through divine testimony) that the articles of faith are true, but experiences herself as being in proper cognitive contact with the truth ("united" to it), rather than suffering cognitive malfunction as a "madman". In

[198] *In Jn* C4 L6.
[199] I.e. because of the teaching of Christ himself, who is *Prima Veritas*. Aquinas evidently does not mean that it immediately appears to believers that the articles of faith are true, because then they would lack the formal object of faith.
[200] STIIaIIae1.1.
[201] *In Div. Nom.* C7 L5. Brent's translation (127).

modern terms, one might say that she experiences her beliefs as being appropriately formed- or perhaps, reliably truth-directed. If this perception is non-inferential (which admittedly, Aquinas does not make clear), then given the strong parallels between the inner instinct to believe and the "light of faith", it seems likely that the former too would include a non-inferential perception (i.e. a "seeming) that to believe those presenting themselves as God's messengers is to believe the truth.[202]

I admit, however, that the above interpretation of Aquinas' view of the interior instinct to believe is speculative, and despite what I have said may cut against his insistence on the importance of the will in securing certainty for faith. Unfortunately, Aquinas does not make evident in what way one addressed the *vocatio interior* perceives it fitting to believe God's messengers. Yet there is a third reason why on Aquinas' epistemology one guided to faith by God's interior call should not need evidence from signs to give "internalist" justification of her religious beliefs. As Pickavé notes[203], on Aquinas' account, scepticism about the reliability of particular faculties should broadly be unreasonable since God has so constituted humans so that we can fulfil our basic desires and orientations[204]- just as divine providence directs all objects to their proper ends.[205] This can be known by the light of natural reason[206]- although of course, radical sceptics who deny e.g. the reliability of sense perception would not be persuaded by Aquinas' arguments for the existence of God and His exercise of Providence, nor does Aquinas spend time trying to refute such a position. It is perhaps this assumption which enables Aquinas to write without further comment that "an inner impulse to act well is the work of God, and those who resist it sin" when discussing the obligation to believe on the basis of the interior vocation.[207] Presumably, therefore, since it is knowable by natural reason that our desires are generally salutary and can be fulfilled, one addressed with an interior vocation might have some (defeasible) reason to regard her instinct to believe as reliably truth-directed, in which case she

[202] Again, presumably the idea should not be that it immediately appears to the believer that what the preachers teach is true, for then they will not believe on the basis of divine revelation.
[203] Pickavé, "Human Knowledge", 313.
[204] Cf. *SCG* III, 48.11- "Again, it is impossible for natural desire [i.e. for the knowledge of God] to be unfulfilled, since 'nature does nothing in vain.' Now, natural desire would be in vain if it could never be fulfilled".
[205] Cf. STIa.2.3 *resp* ("fifth way").
[206] This is the broad thrust of *SCG* III.
[207] *In Jn* C15 L5.

will not need any knowledge of the motives of credibility to meet any "internalist" requirements for justification which require one to know that one's beliefs are reliably produced.

5.0 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to examine the religious epistemology of Aquinas with the goal of drawing a strong positive comparison between his own model of faith and reason and CRE, building Plantinga's suggestion that Aquinas espoused something similar to "Reformed Epistemology". To this end, I have been able firstly to argue that Aquinas' religious epistemology is very close to that of Augustine, whose religious epistemology I have also claimed bears strong resemblance to CRE. In Aquinas, we see both a continued emphasis on the character of faith as the assent to propositions revealed by God, and also an emphasis on the Church's role as the institution which presents and clarifies revelation to the believer.

Further, even more clearly than Augustine, Aquinas ultimately rejects evidentialist constraints on the rationality of faith, although he affirms that there is evidence for the fact that God speaks through the Church, and that some people come to faith in virtue of having apprehended this evidence. Aquinas holds, however, that the proper way to come to faith is to be led by an interior instinct infused by God, which generates basic belief that the gospel is credible. In modern terms, this basic belief might be the product of an "appearance" that the gospel is credible, meaning that according to the influential position of "Phenomenal Conservatism", this belief should be *prima facie* justified in an "internalist sense". When one has come to faith, an infused "light of faith" continues to allow the believer to perceive in a basic way that she ought to believe. This allows the articles of faith to constitute something like "first principles" of scientific knowledge for the believer, although she holds to these principles by an act of will rather than because they force themselves upon her intellect. This latter emphasis on the importance of will also resembles my "Catholic" alterations to Reformed Epistemology, which itself lacks a serious role for the will. In short, Aquinas' own model of faith comes very close to CRE.

Chapter Five: Newman on Faith and Reason

1.0 Introduction

The final prominent figure within the Catholic theological tradition whose religious epistemology I shall investigate is the nineteenth-century convert, Blessed John Henry Newman. Newman's views on faith are of interest for several reasons. Firstly, Newman is a rare example of a Catholic theologian of this period who was neither committed to Scholastic tradition, nor consciously rejecting Scholasticism in light of Kant's "Copernican revolution".[208] Although Newman was anxious to show the congruence of his position with Scholastic epistemology, his views remained idiosyncratic. This was partly because Newman began his writings on faith before conversion "with no aid from Anglican, and no knowledge of Catholic theologians".[209] Even after becoming Catholic, despite engagement with contemporary Scholasticism, Newman's reading of Catholic theology and modern sceptical authors remained patchy.[210] Newman accordingly evinced modesty about the value of his own work on faith and reason.[211] Yet whilst Newman's religious epistemology was criticised as novel, it did not fall under ecclesiastical censure. This was due both to his desire to engage with tradition, and to his prescient attempt to forge a *via media* between rationalism and fideism. An examination of Newman's work, therefore, presents an opportunity to engage with part of Catholic tradition which is conversant with both Western Catholic tradition and more modern philosophy.[212]

Newman's contribution to the analysis of faith was stimulated by his reaction against the emergence of Victorian scepticism which he dubbed "liberalism". By Newman's definition, liberalism includes a range of positions predicated on the notion that since religious beliefs differ widely, none can be held with certainty.[213] Newman perceived that such claims, undergirded by "empiricist" philosophy, were

[208] For the views of Newman's contemporaries, cf.Aidan Nichols, *From Hermes to Benedict XVI: Faith and Reason in Modern Catholic Thought* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2009).
[209] *U.S.* Preface, ix.
[210] There is detailed discussion in secondary literature concerning which modern philosophers Newman read. Newman likely only knew authors of the British empiricist tradition (Butler, Hume and Locke) in any detail, although he had passing acquaintance with Continental philosopher such as Kant. Cf. Boekraad, *The Argument from Conscience to the Existence of God according to J.H.Newman* (Louvain: Ed. Nauwelaerts, 1961), 7-51.
[211] Cf. *U.S.*, 277; *T.P.*, 84.
[212] i.e. in this case, British empiricism.
[213] Cf. *Apo.* Note A, (239).

antithetical to Catholic demands for propositional belief in dogma with perfect certainty and rational tenacity. He further found that whilst "evidentialist" defences of faith's rationality typified by the work of Butler and Paley were salutary, they failed to explain how faith might rationally attain the degree of certainty required by the Church.[214] In short, Newman saw both the modern problem of the rational justification of religious belief, and the particular difficulty of giving a Catholic account on which propositional belief is gracious, certain and freely chosen. More than Augustine and Aquinas therefore, Newman anticipates Plantinga's project of giving an analysis of faith in light of modern scepticism.

Newman's views have had a limited but important impact on Catholic religious epistemology. Although initial reactions to the *Grammar* were mixed, his analysis of faith influenced at least two movements in Catholic thought. Firstly, as Roger Aubert outlines,[215] Newman's views were appropriated by authors such as Henri Bremond, who were influenced by Maurice Blondel.[216] On Bremond's questionable reading,[217] Newman foreshadowed Blondel in stressing the uncertainty of apologetic arguments from miracles or natural theology, and emphasised the rational importance of an inner desire for beatitude. More importantly, Nicolas Steeves argues that Newman's work was an important influence on Pierre Rousselot, whose analysis of faith was sketched above.[218] Although "The Eyes of Faith" does not cite Newman extensively, Rousselot later affirms his dependence on Newman, crediting him with "so many immortal passages, to which I am indebted to a large extent for [my] theory".[219] Like Newman, Rousselot sought to give a realistic account of how believers, including the uneducated, hold a rational faith. Steeves mentions two particular similarities between the positions of Newman and Rousselot.[220] Firstly, Rousselot stresses with Newman the importance of the affections in coming to faith, although he fears that Newman believes that natural virtue alone underlies faith. Secondly, Newman's concept of the "illative sense", which synthesises data and infers

[214] Cf. *Apo.*, 37.
[215] Aubert, *Problème*, 343-356.
[216] Cf. Nichols, *From Hermes to Benedict*, 152-181.
[217] Bremond's reading was contested by English authors including William Ward and Philip Flanagan, *Newman, Faith and the Believer* (London: Sands, 1946).
[218] Nicolas Steeves, "Newman's Explicit Influence on Rousselot: Apparent Contrasts?", *Gregorianum* 96 (4) (2015).
[219] Pierre Rousselot, *Essays on Love and Knowledge*, (Milwaukee: Marquette UP, 2007), 218.
[220] Steeves, "Newman's Influence", 741-44.

its best explanation resembles the infused "synthetic power" which according to Rousselot spontaneously perceives evidence for Christianity. In summary, Newman was an important inspiration for one of the major Catholic analyses of faith before Vatican II, which itself heavily influenced von Balthasar and thus contemporary Catholic epistemology.

By contrast, Newman's thought has until recently been neglected by analytic philosophers of religion.[221] Accordingly, Reformed Epistemologists have not engaged extensively with Newman, although Plantinga quotes him twice in *WCB*.[222] Recently, several commentators have noted the resemblance between Newman's claim that God is perceived in conscience and the Reformed contention that basic belief in God is generated by CMP or the *sensus divinitatis*.[223] However, to my knowledge there has been no wider comparison of Newman's analysis of faith with Reformed Epistemology.

Newman's thought has inspired various epistemological positions because it contains several strains which developed following the evolution of Newman's own beliefs and dialogue with non-believers. Although changes in Newman's position are not always appreciated by commentators,[224] several treatments thus outline his position diachronically. In order to most accurately compare Newman's

[221] Cf. Fergus Kerr "'In an Isolated and, Philosophically, Uninfluential Way': Newman and Oxford Philosophy" in Terrence Merrigan and Ian Ker (ed.) *Newman and the Word* (Louvain: Peeters, 2000), for Newman's neglect in twentieth-century Anglophone philosophy. However, recent "analytic" interest in Newman includes contributions by Jamie Ferraira, *Doubt and Religious Commitment: The Role of Will in Newman's Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Anthony Kenny (2000) *The Unknown God: Agnostic Essays* (London: Continuum, 2004) 125-154 ; D.Z. Phillips, "Antecedent Presumption, Faith and Logic" in Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan (ed.) *Newman and Faith* (Louvain: Peeters 2014); Mark Wynn, "The Relationship of Religion and Ethics: A Comparison of Newman and Contemprary Philosophy of Religion" *Heythrop Journal* 46 (4) (2005); William Wainwright, *Reason and the Heart: A Prolegomenon to a Critique of Passional Reason* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995) 55-83; Ieuan Williams, "Faith and Scepticism: Newman and the Naturalist Tradition", *Philosophical Investigations* 15 (1992); John Lamont, "Newman on Faith and Rationality", *Internal Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 40 (2) (1996) 63-84; Frederick Aquino, *Communities of Informed Judgement: Newman's Illative Sense and Accounts of Rationality* (Washington DC: CUA Press, 2000); Patrick Sherry, "John Henry Newman and William Froude, F.R.S.", *Heythrop Journal* 52 (3) (2010); Basil Mitchell "Newman as a Philosopher" and Hugo Meynell "Newman's Vindication of Faith in the *Grammar of Assent* in Ian Ker and Alan Hill (ed.) *Newman After a Hundred Years* (New York: OUP, 1990) and Cyril O'Regan, "John Henry Newman", in William Abraham and Frederick Aquino (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Epistemology of Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2017).

[222] Plantinga, *WCB*, 98; 454. The first quotation (*Grammar*, 177) highlights Newman's rejection of classical foundationalism in Reidian vein; the second (*U.S.*, 199) his insistence upon the importance of the correct affective attitude for successful religious enquiry.

[223] Including Wynn "Religion and Ethics"; Gerard Hughes, "Conscience" in Ian Kerr and Terrence Merrigan (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 89-220 and Sherry, "Newman and Froude".

[224] E.g. Kenny, *Unknown God*, 126.

views to CRE, I likewise adopt this method, noting that at some stages Newman's views coincide more closely with mine than at others. I begin by examining Newman's views up to his conversion in 1845, which were most clearly condensed in his *University Sermons* (U.S.). Although there are already developments within this period, I argue that his conversion and encounter with Scholastic theology in 1846 forced him to substantially re-think his model of faith. The understanding of faith which Newman gained in the 1840's remained influential on his thought. The second stage in my analysis of Newman's religious epistemology, therefore, examines his position in the years following conversion, with a focus on privately composed notes.[225] After the 1840's, Newman's writings on faith moved towards the position which found its expression in his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. Although this did not necessitate the abandonment of Newman's prior analysis of faith, which he continued to broadly affirm, it tends to render the latter superfluous. The epistemology of the *Grammar* accounts more naturally for many properties of faith (notably, certainty and freedom) which the Scholastic analysis had previously attempted to explain. The final section of my exposition of Newman's thought, therefore, focuses on this last position, as expressed in private papers and the *Grammar*.

Unlike previous chapters, where I have argued that Augustine and Aquinas came close to espousing CRE, I cannot claim so tight a fit with Newman's views. With a few exceptions, Newman maintains throughout his works that one must have evidence for the truth of Christianity to rationally embrace it. Nevertheless, this does not prevent Newman's analysis of faith (particularly, in earlier works) bearing important resemblances to CRE. On the issue of belief in God, Newman's position seems very close to Reformed Epistemology, as recent commentators have noticed. I conclude, therefore, that whilst Newman did not embrace CRE, elements of his religious epistemology bear close similarity to it.

[225] In particular, the *Theses De Fide* which he composed in Rome (1846), in addition to a Latin introduction he composed for a French edition of his *University Sermons* (1847). Newman's novel *Loss and Gain* was also published at this time, followed shortly by his *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*.

2.0 Newman's Position to 1845

The problem of reconciling Christian faith with the demands of reason occupied Newman throughout his life.[226] Many of Newman's works before his conversion address the problem of faith and reason,[227] but Newman's most detailed exploration of the topic is given in a series of University Sermons preached between 1826 and 1843, published in 1843 as a collection explicitly dealing with the problem of faith and reason.[228] In what follows I focus on elucidating the analysis of faith developed in this volume, appealing to Newman's other writings to further illustrate his argument.

2.1 Newman's Early Notion of Faith

According to traditional Catholic theology, faith is perfectly certain, freely chosen and divinely infused assent to revelation on the basis that it is revealed by God. My comparison of Newman's early efforts to reconcile faith and reason with CRE will benefit, therefore, by initially outlining Newman's Anglican concept of faith. One might think that given his interest in reconciling the claims of faith and reason, Newman would conceive of faith as involving propositional assent to religious claims. Yet as Flanagan notes,[229] Newman uses the term "faith" with various senses before conversion, some of which sound closer to *fiducia* than propositional assent, as when he defines faith as "feel[ing] in good earnest that we are creatures of God".[230] Often, Newman explains that saving faith partly consists in affective elements which manifest themselves in action, such as in *Sermon IX* (1832), where he defines faith as "an implicit reliance in God's command and promise, and a zeal for His honour; a [complete] surrender and devotion… to Him".[231] Nevertheless, faith involves propositional belief. It is "an acquiescence of reason in the Gospel Mysteries",[232] and Newman emphasises the

[226] Cf. David Pailin, *The Way to Faith: An Examination of Newman's "Grammar of Assent" as a Response to the Search for Certainty in Faith* (London: Epworth, 1969), 68; Ian Ker, *The Achievement of John Henry Newman* (London: Collins, 1991), 35.
[227] For example, several of his *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, the *Essays on Miracles, Via Media, Arians of the Fourth Century* and immediately prior to conversion the *Essay on the Development of Doctrine*.
[228] I quote from the third edition of 1872, making clear when I refer to the notes which Newman added to that edition.
[229] Flanagan, *Newman*, 17.
[230] *PPS* III, 79.
[231] *U.S.*, 156.
[232] *PPS* III, 86.

importance of cognitive elements of faith against Keble's position.[233] Newman's emphasis on the importance of active faith is pastoral, and linked to his insistence that only *fides formata* imparts justification.[234] Where Newman discusses the relationship between faith and reason, however, he has propositional faith in mind.[235]

In line with his pragmatic view of faith, Newman does not in his early work insist that Christians should believe with perfect certainty or rational tenacity. Newman rejects this Catholic doctrine as too dogmatic, maintaining that doubt is somehow necessarily linked to faith.[236] Rather, he emphasises the importance of believing that Christianity is sufficiently probable and momentous to rationally warrant behaving as if it were true.[237] As an Anglican Newman recognises two properties which Catholics ascribe to faith. Firstly, faith is gracious, since revealed dogma is unknowable by natural reason,[238] and the habit of faith itself is divinely infused.[239] Secondly, faith is a matter of moral appraisal, because it depends upon the co-operation of the will.[240]

Newman uses the term "reason" in various senses. He explains in the Preface to the 1872 edition of U.S. that he understands the term "reason" in four ways in U.S. Most generally, Newman understands reasoning as "any process…of the mind, by which, from knowing one thing, it advances on to know another". Newman also has narrower uses of the term, which can obscure his meaning.[241] Firstly, "reason" can standard for expertise at casting arguments into explicitly logical form. Secondly, it can mean arriving at beliefs by principally considering *a posteriori* evidence rather than *a priori* probabilities. Finally, it can signify the "wisdom of the world": the effort to investigate religion

[233] *Apologia*, 37.
[234] Cf. *PPS* IV 'Faith and Love' (307-17) where faith is described as growing out of love, yet also as its "guardian" (314); *Lectures on Justification*, 11 (252-273).
[235]Before conversion, Newman could not hold that faith involved wholescale belief in revelation as defined by the Roman Church. However, in *VM*, he argues that Anglicans ought to assent to Patristic tradition as embodied in the creeds.
[236] *VM* I, 85-6.
[237] Cf. *PPS* I, "Faith Without Sight" (21) where Newman asserts that "a man's acting upon a message is the measure of his believing it", granting that "[i]f religion be not a practical matter, it is right and philosophical in us to be sceptics". William Fey, *Faith and Doubt: The Unfolding of Newman's Thought on Certainty* (Shepherdstown WV: Patmos Press, 1976) , 51 notes that Newman admitted to being tempted to hold a similar view even as a Catholic.
[238] *U.S.*, 171.
[239] *U.S.*, 180; 193. In *Jfc* (e.g. 266), Newman asserts that unformed faith is not gracious; though perhaps he merely means not salvific.
[240] *U.S.*, 179; 192; 229.
[241] *U.S.* Preface xiv-xvii.

without the necessary piety. Since Newman's analysis denies that faith principally involves these latter three species of reason, it can sometimes seem that he claims that faith is entirely opposed to reason; whereas actually, faith can be considered an act of reason *qua* rational inference.

2.2 The Rational Grounding of Faith in the *University Sermons*

2.2.1 Conscience and Presumption

When Newman reflected as a Catholic on *University Sermons*, he highlighted his insistence on the importance of "antecedent presumptions" to the rationality of faith as his most original idea.[242] Throughout Newman's work, "natural" religious belief, formed by attention to the dictates of conscience, underlies Christian faith by instilling knowledge of God's existence and nature, and hope for further divine revelation. I therefore begin the exploration of Newman's view of faith by illustrating the role of this vein of thought in Newman's model of faith and reason.

From the start of U.S., Newman emphasises the importance of moral attitudes towards intellectual enquiry. Highlighting the relationship between the claims of the gospel and science, Newman asserts that the spread of intellectual virtues enjoined by Christianity such as "modesty, patience and caution" facilitated scientific development.[243] Scientific achievement can, however, breed pride antithetical to the humility required by Christianity and lead to rejection of the doctrine of original sin which is central to the gospel's plausibility.[244] Newman continues to stress the importance of intellectual humility and openness to revelation throughout the U.S. and the rest of his *oeuvre*.[245] Newman notes various negative effects of pride on reasoning. Firstly, arrogance about our ability to reason well regarding religion can generate disdain for the offer of divine revelation as unnecessary and incompatible with our moral/cognitive autonomy: "[a] man who fancies that he can find out truth by himself, disdains revelation... [he] fears that it will interfere with his own imaginary discoveries, he is

[242] Henry Tristam, (ed.), "Cardinal Newman's Theses de Fide and his proposed Introduction to the French translation of the University Sermons", *Gregorianum* XVIII (1937), 241.
[243] *U.S.*, 6.
[244] *U.S.* 12-15.
[245] Cf. *GA* 241, 321.

unwilling to consult it".[246] Secondly, treating religious truth as an object of quotidian enquiry for discussion "over the wine cup" and without the cultivation of moral/intellectual virtue can make people "indifferentists". Such discussion of religious subjects lessens their existential importance and leads to the attitude that since religious opinions differ, religious truth is unimportant or unobtainable.[247] Lastly, pride can ally itself with sinful resistance to the very idea of being subject to divine commandments. This "wilful" attitude occasions the assembling of specious objections to Christianity: "a perverse will easily collects together a system of notions to justify itself in its obliquity".[248] It is very difficult to make someone believe a proposition which they do not wish to believe.[249] On Newman's view, therefore, faith is sustained by intellectual and moral virtues which prevent the perversion of our rational evaluation of Christianity.

Most importantly, pride harms our ability to reason fruitfully about religious topics by directing our attention away from obedience and attention to conscience.[250] This is no mere *sine qua non* for faith, but "the essential principle and sanction of Religion in the mind".[251] The experience of conscience itself undergirds the propositions believed by those with "natural religion" starting with belief in the nature and existence of God. Although Newman does not develop his "Argument from Conscience" at great length in U.S., he hints at how the experience of conscience leads to theism.[252] Newman later explains his position in greater detail in his "Philosophical Notes"[253] and the *Grammar*. In the former, he notes that the argument had been "my own chosen proof of [theism] for thirty years".[254] Given that Newman's "argument" does not change significantly in these later works, I draw upon these latter to illustrate his position here.

---

[246] *PPS* I. "The Self-Wise Enquirer", 219.
[247] Cf. *U.S.*, 199.
[248] Cf. *U.S.* 164.
[249] *U.S.*, 189- "It is almost a proverb, that persons believe what they wish to be true".
[250] Cf. *PPS* I , 219.
[251] *U.S.*, 18.
[252] Cf. *U.S.*, 18-21, 105; PPS. I 18, 216.
[253] Edward Sillem, *The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman* (London: Nauwelaerts, 1970), 30-78 ("Proof of Theism" (1859)).
[254] Sillem, *Philosophical Notebook* Vol. II, 67.

Newman distinguishes between conscience as a faculty indicating that particular actions are im/moral, and in its function as condemning or approving our behaviour.[255] In its latter function, we perceive a morally perfect authority exterior to ourselves, to whom we are morally responsible. When we misbehave, we feel guilt and shame at our failure in obligation. By contrast, on acting well we feel pride and repose. The former feelings in particular are ordinarily addressed to a moral person to whom we are morally responsible, who has knowledge of our failings.[256] Accordingly, the phenomenology of conscience suggests the existence of a morally perfect, omniscient being to whom we are responsible and whose judgement we fear. "[Since] the cause of these emotions does not belong to this visible world…the phenomena of Conscience, as a dictate, avail to impress the imagination with the picture of a Supreme Governor, a Judge, holy, just, powerful, all-seeing, [and] retributive".[257] Thus, conscience impresses the importance of moral behaviour, and suggests the possibility of a future life, in which our condition depends on divine judgement of our behaviour. Conscience even naturally encourages us to hope for some penitential system by which we can atone for sins.[258] Newman admits that the information supplied by conscience about the existence and nature of God is limited. Notably, it fails to clearly indicate that God is a Person rather than a regulative cosmic principle.[259] Further, whilst natural reason *can* attain knowledge of God through reflection on conscience, it has often attained a false notion of God. This was due partly to sinful rebellion against conscience, and partly to the encroachment of superstitions about God rooted in idolatry.[260] However, Newman's attitude to such mistakes made before Christ is mixed. With Rahner,[261] he suggests that

[255] *G.A.*, 105.
[256] *G.A.*, 109-10.
[257] *G.A.*, 110.
[258] *U.S.*, 21.
[259] *U.S.*, 22-3.
[260] *U.S.* 40-3.
[261] This is not to say that Newman comes close to conflating nature and grace as Rahner does by claiming that all human acts are in this world elevated as responses to the supernatural existential. Rather, whilst acknowledging God's universal offer of grace/revelation (even through pagan traditions which contain error), Newman distinguished firmly between natural/fallen and gracious instincts which produce very different fruits, and emphasised that grace was absolutely necessary to lead a life directed to salvation. Cf. *PPS* I, 'The State of Grace'; *PPS* VII, 'Religion a Weariness to Natural Man' and 'Love of Religion, a New Nature'. Both themes are found together in *Mix.* 'Nature and Grace'. There Newman can write of God's grace outside baptism, "His grace is over all the earth" (153), and assert that, "No one has ever been deprived of the assistance of grace", even amongst heathens (159). Yet the overall purpose of the Discourse is to insist on the distinction between works of grace and nature (e.g. 165), and the importance of real acting on opportunities to co-operate with grace

there was never a time when humans were entirely deprived of gracious knowledge of God. For pagans, this gracious knowledge came via primitive religious beliefs which ascribed personal character and purpose to God, knowledge of and adherence to which is a divine condescension allowing for their salvation.[262]

Contrary to John Mackie's reading,[263] Newman does not primarily construe the perception of God through conscience as the inference from the existence of perceived moral dictates and attendant emotions to the existence of God as their best explanation.[264] Rather, he suggests that belief in the existence of moral duties and God who commands them is basic- an "instinctive apprehension",[265] acquired through reflection on conscience just as beliefs about our surroundings are immediately acquired from sense perception, even though the inference from sense-data to external objects is a matter of "faith".[266] On Newman's account, forming beliefs about moral laws and the Lawgiver on the basis of conscience is a basic doxastic practice. Believing in line with conscience is, therefore, "of the nature of Faith", since it "brings with it no proof of its truth, and commands attention to it[self] on its own authority". [267] In view of this, Newman strongly contrasts "Reason" (popularly so-called) which consists of beliefs formed by or upon inference from practices acceptable to classical foundationalists with Faith, which is based upon the cognitive deliverances of conscience.[268] For Newman, there is no difference between the epistemic value of beliefs formed on the basis of attention to the phenomenology of conscience and that of those formed on the basis of sense perception. Newman argues that both doxastic practices are natural to humans, and so *prima facie* deserve equal respect as yielding true beliefs. [269] Conscience merely reveals the existence of a different sort of object to our other faculties, and its dictates are more easily ignored through temptation. Newman might have

---

as consciously encountered in the Church and Sacraments (160-5). For a balanced account of Newman's attitude to Non-Christian religions, see Ian Ker, *Newman on Vatican II* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 127-30.
[262] *U.S.*, 33.
[263] John Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and Against the Existence of God* (Oxford: OUP, 1982) 103-6.
[264] Cf. Wynn, "Religion and Ethics", 436-8.
[265] *U.S.*, 214.
[266] For this comparison see *PPS* I, 200; *U.S.*, 213-4 and (later) "Proof of Theism", in Sillem, *Philosophical Notebook*, e.g. 30, 39, 59-60, 78.
[267] *U.S.*, 19.
[268] *U.S.*, 58.
[269] *U.S.*, 189. *PPS* I, 200.

added that religious beliefs formed in line with conscience possess "externalist" justification, since conscience is designed by God to produce true beliefs about Himself.[270] In modern terms, attention to conscience yields properly basic belief in theism and the presentiment of further, salvific revelation.

Newman argues that this perception of God in conscience, and attendant hope for salvation, provides the principal reason for embracing Christian faith. On Newman's account, there are two ways in which a proposition may be rendered plausible: either by having high antecedent probability, or by having strong evidential support. In Newman's view, considerations of the former sort commonly render faith rationally acceptable. One rationally comes to faith on this basis as follow. Firstly, a prospective believer comes, by consulting conscience, to believe in the existence of God. Moreover, she envisages as a serious possibility the revelation of more intimate truths about God and His Providence: particularly, a divine plan to remedy the problem of sin. A revelation such as Christianity, therefore, has a high prior probability for this enquirer. When presented with the gospel, it seems to her that Christianity fits the description of the expected divine intervention in history.[271] Given the high prior probability of Christianity's truth, therefore, even slim evidence for its truth is enough to warrant faith.[272]

Newman foresees several objections to his account. It might be contested that it is unacceptable to reason thus on the basis of antecedent presumptions about probabilities, particularly where belief in a proposition's probability is encouraged by passional considerations. In response, Newman asserts that every argument starts with presumptions- "there must ever be assumed [in reasoning] something which is incapable of proof".[273] Notable examples include trust in the reliability of sensory perception, memory and logical inference, which we hold to instinctively although these cognitive mechanisms

[270] *U.S.*, 229-32.: "It does not follow, because, in the insignificant matters of this world, *à priori* judgments run counter to judgments on evidence, that therefore, in the weightier matters of the next, a merciful Providence may not have so ordered the relation between our minds and His revealed will, that presumption, which is the method of the many, may lead to the same conclusions as examination, which is the method of the few." Cf. *U.S.* 232, *PPS* I, 217-9.
[271] *U.S.*, 203- "[A convert] has a keen sense of the intrinsic excellence of the message, of its desirableness, of its likeness to what it seems to him Divine Goodness would vouchsafe did He vouchsafe any, of the need of a Revelation and its probability".
[272] Newman further argues that it is highly important to embrace true revelation should it be proposed for belief. Given this duty to believe, one should rationally err on the side of credulity in accepting revelation.
[273] *U.S.*, 213.

are fallible.[274] Further, Newman foreshadows Plantinga in rejecting the feasibility of *a priori* attempts to delineate criteria for which "presumptions" are properly basic.[275] Rather, since religious presumptions are apparently properly basic deliverances of a cultivated conscience, he assumes that these antecedent beliefs favourable to Christianity possess what we would now term *prima facie* "internalist" justification for believers. Moreover, some secular presumptions are coloured by passions, such as our readiness to believe in natural disasters in our proximity, and so likewise belief in the likelihood of revelation need not be inappropriate if encouraged by hope.[276]

Secondly, Newman envisages a "Great-Pumpkin" objection to his account: that adherents of other faiths might claim that their religious beliefs are formed in response to revelations which had, in their eyes, high prior probability. Newman rejects an evidentialist response, involving the comparison of Christianity with other religions on the basis of historical/philosophical plausibility. [277] Instead, Newman adverts again to the role of conscience in the formation of properly basic religious beliefs about the antecedent probability of revelation. Non-Christians are often led to false presumptions (e.g. idolatry) because of malformed consciences. This is evident in the case of sceptics such as Hume, whose argument against the credibility of miracles rests upon a basic belief that the probability of divine revelation which might uniquely occasion miracles is low. Careful attention to conscience, however, should demonstrate enough about the nature of God to show that Christianity is uniquely the type of revelation one would expect from God.[278] In short, serious Christians and non-believers are not epistemic peers, due to the cognitive effects of sin, which hinders believing in line with the phenomenology of a properly-formed conscience.

2.2.2 The Role of Evidence in the U.S.

It might seem that Newman holds that religious belief should be grounded purely upon the properly basic belief that a revelation is likely- together with the perception that Christianity resembles an

[274] *U.S.*, 213.
[275] *U.S.*, 191.: "probabilities have no definite ascertained value, and are reducible to no scientific standard, what are such to each individual, depends on his moral temperament".
[276] *U.S.*, 188, 228.
[277] *U.S.*,223-4.
[278] *U.S.*, 240.

expected revelation- without recourse to evidence acceptable to classical foundationalists. I now examine the role which evidence plays in rationally grounding faith in the U.S.

At times, Newman seems to contrast faith and "reason" (considered as belief on the basis of evidence) so as to exclude *any* inference from evidence to faith. Newman suggests that God need not have provided any evidence for the truth of the gospel,[279] and could instead have caused (presumably, basic) assent to the creed without the use of our ordinary cognitive faculties. Even under the present dispensation, Newman denigrates the importance of evidence when considering the faith of children or the uneducated.[280] Newman suggests that "Faith, viewed as an internal habit or act, does not depend upon enquiry and examination, but has its own special basis, whatever that is, as truly as Conscience has".[281] Similarly, he denies that "any intellectual act is necessary for right Faith besides itself; that it need be much more than a presumption".[282] Given that for Newman beliefs formed on the basis of Conscience are basic, these passages hint at a position which might claim that faith in the gospel (rather than its prior probability) is itself properly basic. Despite these hints, Newman rejects as "enthusiasm" the notion that Christians possess some specially infused faculty for recognising the truth of the gospel.[283] Newman has more of a role for evidence than is at first apparent. Faith is permissible "not indeed without, but upon slender evidence".[284]

One might infer from Newman's emphasis on the importance of antecedent probabilities, coupled with his suggestion that faith needs to be consonant with but not based on natural reason, that the "evidence" relevant to belief in the gospel is that of its conformity with anticipated revelation. This interpretation was envisaged by Bremond, and led to suspicion of Newman's orthodoxy upon conversion. Yet Newman maintains that *some* evidence for Christianity acceptable to non-believers is necessary for rational belief. Faith is founded upon both "the word of its human messenger, and the

[279] *U.S.*, 261; *PPS* I, 24.
[280] *U.S.* ,184, 235.
[281] *U.S.*, 184.
[282] *U.S.*, 234.
[283] Presumably, enthusiasm is partly deplorable for its links to Reformed Christianity. In *Loss and Gain* (142-4), the Calvinist Freeborn claims that faith is grounded in a faculty perceptive only to those who possess it.
[284] *U.S.*, 190.

likelihood the message".[285] Examples which Newman gives to illustrate this point imply that faith is partly based upon evidence acceptable to sceptics. The Athenians, for instance, are said to have believed the resurrection given both the testimony of St. Paul *and* its antecedent probability.[286] Similarly, Newman mentions believers assenting to doctrine "because one said to have wrought miracles has taught it", or "because I saw what I took to be a miracle".[287] These reasons for faith should count as evidence acceptable on classical foundationalism. However, Newman acknowledges that this evidence is, by the standards of ordinary secular reasoning, very weak. Faith is principally based upon the appreciation of the antecedent probability of revelation together with the character of Christianity.

In limiting the role which evidence plays in grounding faith, Newman is making a limited set of claims. Firstly, Newman is often concerned in the U.S. to defend the cogency of the faith of uneducated Christians who are incapable of appreciating sophisticated apologetic "evidences" for Christianity. When Newman argues that faith is not rationally grounded in evidences, part of his position is simply descriptive, and does not deny that the arguments of natural theology or Biblical miracles constitute powerful evidence for Christianity. Indeed, Newman's attitude to the cogency of evidences in the U.S. is mixed. In several passages, Newman appears to concede that the arguments of natural theology may be unsound.[288] As a Catholic, Newman was embarrassed by this position, and tried to mitigate the force of such statements in notes to the third edition. On the other hand, in the first sermon, Newman (influenced by Butler) refers to the existence of a mass of evidence which makes the truth of Christianity probable, highlighting the development of science under the Christian moral influence as an example.[289] As Flanagan observes,[290] in his first *Essay on Miracles* (1825-6) Newman likewise claims that a powerful cumulative case for Christianity can be made from Scriptural accounts of Jesus' miracles and resurrection, if one does not accord the possibility of

[285] *U.S.*, 203.
[286] *U.S.*, 203.
[287] *U.S.*, 208.
[288] *U.S.*, 70, 194; *PPS* VI, 338. For the limits of natural theology at demonstrating God's personal character and purposes, see *U.S.*, 22, 109.
[289] *U.S.*, 15 refers to "the strength of those accumulated probabilities, which are on other grounds so overpowering".
[290] Flanagan, *Newman*, 26.

revelation accredited by miracles a very low prior probability. [291] Newman even argues that the cumulative case for Christianity, which incorporates the fulfilment of prophecy and the moral excellence of doctrine, would remain compelling if Biblical accounts of miracles were incredible.[292] However, Newman admits that whilst the evidence for Christianity is forceful, it is not sufficiently strong and obvious to compel belief in those who study it with distaste.[293] Overall, whilst Newman vacillates on the strength of "evidences" for theism and Christianity, he allows them some probative value.

Newman's main worry about faith which rests on apologetic arguments is that it is indicative of an age (the eighteenth century) when "love was cold".[294] Engagement with the phenomenology of one's conscience can not only rationally undergird belief in Christianity, but also provides resources for the moral transformation necessary for "saving knowledge".[295] A central concern of Newman's work is to explain how Christians, including uneducated believers, hold to religious beliefs rationally. Even granting the probity of apologetic arguments, it is not obvious that many believe on the basis of such arguments, which they may lack the resources to evaluate. [296] Yet Newman recognises that those able to appreciate "evidences" might employ them fruitfully. Firstly, believers who suffer doubts can be fortified in their faith by considering such arguments. Moreover, "evidences" demonstrate to sceptics the irrationally of their own position. For these reasons, there is perhaps a general obligation for Christians to "cast our religion into the form of Creed and Evidences" (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).[297] For individual believers, however, the evidences are "useful in their place, but not necessary".[298]

2.2.3 Implicit Reasoning from Conscience

It might seem that Newman's rejection of formal apologetic arguments is at odds with his account of how believers typically reason about faith. Granting that most sincere Christians embrace Christianity

[291] Cf. *Two Essays*, 4-12 on miraculous evidence for the gospel, and 93 where Newman claims that evidence from miracles "raises the proof of [Christianity's] divine origin to a moral certainty".
[292] *Two Essays*, 94. Cf. *G.A.*, 442-2.
[293] *U.S.*, 227.
[294] *U.S.*, 197.
[295] *PPS* II, Sermon 14. By contrast, "dead evidences, however perfect, can but create a dead faith"- U.S., 200.
[296] *U.S.*, 66.
[297] *U.S.*, 253.
[298] *U.S.*, 67.

because of its fit with envisioned revelation, it remains the case that a rational believer on this model must be capable of perceiving the congruence between the gospel and such envisioned revelation. Here, Newman anticipates a train of thought which will mature into his theory of an "illative sense".

In the thirteenth sermon, Newman distinguishes between "Implicit" and "Explicit" Reason. Reason, in this context, simply means "ascertaining one thing by means of another". But it is one thing, to reason to a conclusion spontaneously and subconsciously ("implicitly"), and another to explain one's method ("explicitly"), which is often idiosyncratic and difficult to trace.[299] A mark of genius in secular affairs (e.g. philosophy or military strategy) [300] is to infer a conclusion from a mass of data by evaluations too complex to easily express in logical form. [301] The fact that Scripture and our experience of believers fails to indicate much "explicit" reasoning in favour of faith, together with the role played by antecedent probabilities which are difficult to elucidate, indicates that faith is typically the result of such "implicit" reasoning.

2.2.4 The Achievement of Newman's U.S. Model

With the foregoing illustration of Newman's views in mind, it is possible to examine how well Newman's account explains the properties which he believed faith exhibited as an Anglican, many of which correspond with a Catholic analysis of faith. Newman believes that his account explains how propositional assent to divine revelation can be rational. In modern terms, on Newman's account a believer can enjoy both "internalist" justification for her basic belief in God and "externalist" justification insofar as God has established belief in line with the phenomenology of conscience as a reliable mechanism for forming religious beliefs.[302] Moreover, Newman's model can also explain how faith is a supernatural gift, which we freely appropriate. Newman is aware that the position that faith consists of freely chosen acts of propositional assent conflicts with an intuitive argument that since belief consists of the passive perception of facts, direct doxastic voluntarism is psychologically

[299] *U.S.*, 257.
[300] *U.S.*, 217.
[301] *U.S.*, 274
[302] E.g. *U.S.* 229-30; *PPS* I, 217, 219.

impossible.[303] Yet he notes that this argument does not rule out indirect doxastic voluntarism, which forms part of his religious epistemology in U.S. According to Newman, the degree to which one follows one's conscience affects the degree to which one perceives the existence of God as the moral law-giver, which undergirds faith. This also accounts for the supernatural nature of faith.[304] Since humans are habitually sinful, the resolve necessary to follow one's conscience in belief and practice is only secured by co-operation with grace. Thus Newman can explain the natural connection between propositional belief and *agape* which together constitute *fides formata*.

Insofar as Newman's analysis of faith in U.S. portrays faith as a rational, freely chosen and gracious habit, it accords with Catholic *desiderata* for a religious epistemology. However, in line with Newman's early views, nothing in U.S. suggests any certainty in faith. This can be illustrated by considering a topic neglected in U.S.: defeaters for Christianity. According to Newman, "natural religion" consists of basic beliefs about God formed in line with the phenomenology of conscience. Newman thus envisages forming beliefs in line with conscience as a basic doxastic practice parallel to sense perception, memory etc. which delivers as its outputs beliefs consistent with the outputs of these other cognitive mechanisms. Still, there is nothing in Newman's account specifying that were one to perceive that theism was highly unlikely on the basis of secular reason one should not correspondingly lower the credence of one's basic belief in God. Indeed, given Newman's insistence that faith be compatible with the outputs of secular reasoning, this response would seem appropriate on his account. Further, even given firm belief in "natural" religion, there is nothing on Newman's account to prevent another religious system appearing more likely than Christianity in view of its higher "antecedent probability".[305] Accordingly, it does not seem that Newman's exposition posits a high degree of certainty or rational tenacity in faith.

2.3 Newman's Early Analysis of Faith and Reformed Epistemology

It is now possible to briefly compare Newman's early theory of faith with Reformed Epistemology and CRE.

[303] *U.S.*, 192-3.
[304] *U.S.*, 193-4.
[305] i.e. its superior "fit" with the type of antecedently probable revelation.

Newman's account has many similarities with Reformed Epistemology. As with Plantinga and Alston, belief in God is properly basic, although on Newman's account, it follows upon an instinct to believe in line with the phenomenology of conscience. This separates Newman's account of basic belief in God from Plantinga's (which lacks much phenomenological underpinning) and Alston's (where belief in God is derived from direct mystical perception of Him). Further, as Ieuan Williams argues, Newman belongs to a tradition of British naturalism at times exemplified by Hume, which stresses that naturally operative human cognitive faculties are more to be trusted than viewed with scepticism.[306]This attitude likewise informs Plantinga and Alston's view that it is permissible to accept the outputs of basic doxastic practices beyond those endorsed by classical foundationalism. Both Plantinga and Newman envisage beliefs as being properly basic when reliably formed; though they need not be recognisable as properly basic to sceptics.

Like Plantinga, Newman is able to stress that basic religious belief enjoys positive epistemic status because it is formed in line with a reliable, divinely designed plan for the formation of true beliefs. Further, Newman joins Plantinga in emphasising the malign cognitive effects of sin, which obstruct the formation of basic belief. Newman appears to share Reformed Epistemologists' suspicion of direct doxastic voluntarism, whilst granting some indirect control over one's religious beliefs. Unlike Plantinga, Newman does not suggest that faith is certain and rationally tenacious when produced by properly-functioning cognitive mechanisms, although he does maintain that faith should be *practically* certain (i.e. always acted upon as if true).

One major difference between the early Newman and Reformed Epistemologists, however, is that in the U.S., Newman insists upon *some* (weak) evidence acceptable to classical foundationalism being available to the believer for faith to be rational. Moreover, unlike mere theism, Christian faith *is* based on evidence for Newman: the correspondence of the gospel's character with that of anticipated revelation. Belief in the "Great Truths of the Gospel" is not basic for Newman in the U.S., but based on an inference from basic beliefs about God and one's evaluation of Christianity's character. This

[306] Williams, "Faith and Scepticism", 54-9.

process of inference can, however, be largely "implicit" in believers, who may be unable to formalise their reasoning on reflection.

There are two further salient differences between Newman's Anglican model of faith and CRE. Firstly, CRE endorses something approaching direct doxastic voluntarism, claiming that it is possible to more-or-less immediately choose to adopt the practice of believing in accordance with the Church's teachings as basic. Secondly, on CRE, Catholic faith should be a *fundamental* doxastic practice, i.e. engaged in such that its outputs are not overridden by those of any other doxastic practices. Further, on my model Catholic faith should yield as its output certain belief in the articles of faith. On Newman's early model of faith, by contrast, perfect certainty and rational tenacity is not necessary or normative for faith.

3.0 Newman's Early Catholic Doctrine of Faith

Upon becoming Catholic, Newman discovered fresh resources for his religious epistemology in Scholastic theology, as encountered during study in Rome in 1846.[307] As Newman realised before conversion, the Catholic teaching insists that faith is propositional assent to divine revelation which can exist without charity, and also that divine faith is (at least, in paradigm cases) perfectly certain and rationally tenacious. Newman recognised the necessity of adhering to this understanding of faith as a Catholic. Indeed, immediately prior to his conversion, as Fey notes,[308] Newman had begun to emphasise the importance of certainty in faith, quoting (second-hand) Scholastic authors to support his point.[309]

Whilst welcoming the conversion of a prominent Tractarian, the Roman School (around Giovanni Perrone) took exception to aspects of Newman's religious epistemology in the U.S., which had been received without enthusiasm by American Catholics.[310] Specifically, Peronne worried that Newman's position denied the probative force of natural theology and the motives of credibility, and suggested

[307] For a detailed account of Newman's encounter with Scholastic religious epistemology in Rome, cf. C. Michael Shea, "From Implicit and Explicit Reason to Inference and Assent: The Significance of John Henry Newman's Seminary Studies in Rome", *Journal of Theological Studies* 67 (1) (2016), 143-171.
[308] Fey, *Faith and Doubt*, 37.
[309] Cf. *Dev*., 332-6.
[310] Fey, *Faith and Doubt*, 42.

that faith was compatible with probable assent.[311] Alan Brent argues that Roman worries were likely misdirected, assuming that Newman held to a position close to the rationalist Hermes, [312] who believed that Kantian strictures on knowledge meant that only the moral significance of Christianity could serve as a motive of credibility.[313] The questioning of Newman's orthodoxy, combined with his reading of Scholastic theology, caused Newman to rework his analysis of faith. Newman maintained that his position in the U.S. was broadly compatible with a Catholic understanding of faith. To prove his orthodoxy, Newman drew up a document in Latin, summarising his position in a series of theses, supported by a *catena* of quotations from Scholastic authorities and references to the U.S. [314] This document apparently proved acceptable to Newman's Roman teachers, and copies were found among his papers after the Cardinal's death.

An examination of Newman's "*Theses De Fide*", however, reveals that in attempting to reconcile his prior position with Roman orthodoxy, Newman developed his analysis of faith by incorporating his insights on the epistemic significance of conscience and implicit reasoning from antecedent probabilities into a late Scholastic religious epistemology, drawn from Baroque Scholastic authors[315] (e.g. Suarez, De Lugo), as presented by later commentators (e.g. Viva, Perrone).[316] Baroque Scholastics distinguished between "human" and "divine" faith. Human or "acquired" faith is based on motives of credibility which can be evaluated by the *lumen naturale*, such as the miracles of Christ and the spectacular growth of early Christianity.[317] Divine faith, by contrast, is constituted by an infused assent to the Church's teaching purely on the grounds that it was revealed, and not grounded in evidence for the fact of revelation. Following Aquinas, this is the supernatural habit of assenting to the articles of faith because they are divinely revealed, in which belief in the articles of faith is

[311] Tristam, "Theses de Fide", 23.
[312] Alan Brent, "The Hermesian Dimension to the Newman-Perrone Dialogue", *Ephemerides Theologicae Louvanienses*, 61 (1) (1985), 73-99.
[313] Cf. Nichols, *From Hermes to Benedict*, 31-47.
[314] All translations from *Theses* are my own.
[315] For a survey of Baroque Scholastic views until Suarez, cf. Elios Mori, *Il Motivo Della Fede da Gaetano a Suarez: con Appendice di fonti Manoscritte* (Rome: PU Gregorianum, 1953).
[316] Newman read several contemporary Scholastic treatments of faith at Rome, including most importantly Perrone's *Praelectiones Theologicae* Vol. II. He also cites Rene Billuart's *Cursus Theologicus*, Vol. II (Brescia: 1838) and Dominic Viva's *Cursus Theologcus, De Fide, Spe et Charitate* (Pauda: 1765).
[317] Newman generally talks of human faith as merely an assent to the judgement of credibility. This may sometimes be foreshadowed by Baroque Scholastic usage- Cf. Suarez, *Disput. Fid.* I, Disput. III.12.13.

properly basic or a basic belief-forming procedure. Baroque Scholastics agreed that before one could rationally make an act of divine faith, one should make a "judgement of credibility": i.e. that it is rationally permissible to believe that God has revealed doctrine through the Church, and perhaps also a divinely infused "judgement of credentity" (i.e. that one practically ought to have faith). Some Baroque Scholastics adopted Aquinas' position that this judgement of the credibility of revelation can be made on the basis of a *vocatio interior* rather than on the basis of external, public evidence for divine revelation through the Church. However, these cases were regarded as exceptional acts of assistance to those lacking evidence, and by Newman's time, Perrone assumes that the judgement of credibility should be based on external evidence.[318]

3.1 Newman's Model of Faith and Baroque Scholastic Views

In the "Theses", and other works of this time, Newman adopts this basic schema with its division between human and divine faith. Using the "Theses" as a point of departure, I now give a more detailed explanation of Newman's religious epistemology as it developed after his conversion, and illustrate its similarity with Baroque Scholastic positions. I start by illustrating Newman's adoption of the division between divine and human faith, and their attendant properties.

3.1.1 Divine and Human Faith

Newman starts by giving a Scholastic definition of divine faith as "an assent of the intellect to Divine Truth [which is] outstanding, certain and lacking evidence".[319] When Newman asserts that faith is "inevident" he means that a proposition cannot both be believed by faith, and known by an act of *intellectus* or *scientia*.[320] Newman asserts that since the motives of credibility are only probabilistic, they do not "compel the intellect to believe by their own force".[321] Belief is effected by "the will, which, moved by divine grace, commands the intellect to give certain assent to those things, which,

[318] Cf. Perrone, *Praelectiones Theologicae* Vol. II, 1309: "*Atque si firma illa atque indubia evidentia credenda deficent, [assensus fidei] imprudens omnini foret*".
[319] *Theses*, 1. The quotations clarify that he refers to speculative certainty, rather than the practical certainty he had previously claimed to be sufficient. Faith is, of course, assent to a proposition on the basis of its revelation- Cf. *Mix*,194, where faith means "assenting to a doctrine as true, which we do not see, which we cannot prove, because God says it is true, who cannot lie".
[320] Cf. ("On St. Thomas' view of Faith as cogitare cum assensu") in Pailin, *The Way to Faith*, 205.
[321] *Theses* 2;7.

proved to the reason by these motives, do not have certitude but only credibility."[322] It is not clear whether Newman conceives of the judgement of credibility made on the basis of evidence as itself a matter of direct volition, or how its content is related to the assent of divine faith. What does Newman mean by the property of "credibility" which is accorded to revelation by *fides humana*? Plausibly, belief in the credibility of revelation, which in the *Theses* is the proposition believed by human faith,[323]means assent to the proposition that Catholic doctrine can be prudently believed.[324] On this interpretation, *fides acquisita* does not include assent to the articles of faith, although they are perceived as sufficiently probable to make assent reasonable. Accordingly, in the 1840's the assents of divine and human faith are distinct habits with different material objects. As to the role of the will, Newman might simply envisage the directly volitional element of faith as being the will's decision to effect divine faith (see below). By contrast, the judgement of credibility would only be indirectly volitional; dependent on one's moral character.[325]

Whatever Newman's position on the nature of "human faith", it follows that divine faith, which is completely certain (lacking doubt or fear) [326] cannot be grounded in probabilistic arguments, since "no conclusion can be more certain than the premises from which it is drawn".[327] Newman is less clear concerning the certainty of human faith. On the one hand, he maintains that whereas he was accused of claiming in U.S. that "we cannot get beyond probabilities in religious questions", his use of the language of probability referred to the form of argument used in "Evidences" (which often fall short of logical proof) rather than to the "moral" certainty of the believer's assent to the credibility of revelation.[328] Thus, Newman does not "deny that there exist reasons, in themselves most true and certain, so many and so great that they spontaneously coalesce into a well-formed and elaborate body,

[322] *Theses* 9.
[323] *Theses* [end notes]; (Tristam, 239).
[324] Cf. 'Ultimate Resolution'- Pailin, *The Way to Faith*, 207- "The test of a valid proof for credibility…is that it leads the mind *prudently* to receive the conclusion for certain"; 'On the Certainty of Faith' (1853)- *T.P.*, 20- "[a person with the *evidentia credebilitas* believes that] 'I cannot prove its truth, but I can prove I ought to believe it (it ought to be accepted as true)'". 'On the Nature and Cause of Faith' (1848) Pailin, *The Way to Faith*, 208 is more ambiguous: "By credible is not only meant merely capable of belief, but morally or practically certain, though not without doubt and fear; or highly probable, or prudent to believe…".
[325] Cf. Proposed French Introduction to the University Sermons, Sec. 2
[326] *Theses*, 1-2.
[327] 'On the Nature and Cause of Faith' (1848) in Pailin, *The Way to Faith*, 208.
[328] Cf. Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John Henry, Cardinal Newman: Based on his Private Journals and Correspondence* (2 vols.) IFarnborough: Gregg International, 1970), 168-9.

by which… the credibility of revealed religion is grounded".[329] This emphasis on the certainty of *fides acquisita* is driven by a desire to conform to Roman theological consensus.

Newman he also stresses that, unlike divine faith, human faith is not without "doubt or fear".[330] Its arguments, which cannot amount to more than an accumulation of probabilities, "do not absolutely lead to conviction, but are only *motiva credebilitatis*".[331] A prominent theme of *Loss and Gain* and *Discourses*[332] is that whilst a potential convert can sometimes feel sure that God speaks through the Church, only the light of faith which follows the decision to convert can completely dispel doubts that the convert is deceiving herself or should wait upon further evidence. This reveals a tension in Newman's thought which will become more apparent in his mature religious epistemology. On the one hand, Newman endorses the Scholastic distinction between human and divine faith to account for the certainty of faith, which appears impossible if based on probabilistic reasoning. But by contrast, Newman claims that human faith in the credibility of revelation approaches such certainty. The resolution of this tension in favour of the latter insight will become clear below.

Whilst Newman's position on the certainty of human faith developed his Anglican views, his assessment of the means by which the credibility of faith is rationally evaluated remain constant. This can be seen in his Latin draft of an introduction to the French edition of U.S.[333] Here, Newman illustrates the mechanism by which the judgement of credibility is arrived at. As *per* the U.S., Newman stresses the importance of presumptions: basic religious beliefs formed in line with the phenomenology of conscience. He emphasises that giving estimates to presumptions is an essentially *personal* activity. Presumptions which are regarded as reasonable by some will not be by others, and reasoning to or from presumptions occurs in a spontaneous manner which cannot easily be reproduced as a persuasive logical argument. So too, arguments which make faith credible vary among believers. However, he notes elsewhere that for the most part, those reasoning to faith do so on a similar

[329] *Proposed French Introduction*, Sec. 2.
[330] Cf. *Theses*, 9; 'On the Nature of Faith' Pailin, *The Way to Faith*, 208.
[331] 'Ultimate Resolution'- Pailin, *The Way to Faith*, 209.
[332] Cf. *Mix*., 169-91.
[333] Tristam, "Newman on the Act of Faith", 249-260.

basis,[334] which suggests that they are evaluating the same "objective" evidence. Newman suggests that this analysis of the judgement of credibility explains how the rational enquiry which leads to faith is a personal act. This account of the rational grounding of faith is best able to explain how each individual makes a judgement of credibility, since despite the probative force of "evidences" for the credibility of Catholic faith, most believers cannot evaluate such arguments.[335]

3.1.2 Coming to Divine Faith

With the properties of divine and human faith laid out above, it is now possible to examine how, in Newman's Catholic view, one rationally reaches the assent of divine faith.

In contrast with human faith, Newman agrees with most Scholastics that divine faith is not "discursive": articles believed with divine faith are believed solely on the basis that they are divinely revealed, and that they are so revealed is a basic belief.[336] Yet Newman also agrees with Perrone that an evidence-based judgement of credibility is necessary for the act of divine faith to be prudent, and to refute the faith of heretics, rendering them culpable for disbelief.[337] Such an evaluation of the credibility of the Catholic faith is necessary even on the part of children[338] and the uneducated[339] if they are to believe responsibly.

Newman consciously chooses to adopt contemporary orthodoxy on this point. He notes that according to Viva, a minority Scholastic opinion followed Cajetan in rejecting the need for the act of faith to be based on "any prior motive".[340] However, he adopts the consensus position.[341] It is likely that Newman was influenced by his instruction in Rome, as most of the authorities whom he cites are Jesuits who stress the necessity of evidence for the judgement of credibility. However, towards the end of the Theses, Newman nuances his position. Firstly, he notes that believers come to faith on the

[334] *T.P.*, 124.
[335] *T.P.*, 87.
[336] *Theses*, 4-5; Cf. 'On the Nature of Faith' (1848) in Pailin, *The Way to Faith*, 208.
[337] *Theses*, 6.
[338] Cf. 'On the Certainty of Faith' (1853), Sec. 5 in *T.P.*, 27.
[339] *Theses*, 8.
[340] *Theses*, 6. It is not clear that Viva means an "external" motive, but in the Thesis in question, Newman seems to be discussing the necessity of such motives.
[341] *Theses*, 6.

basis of different arguments.[342] Secondly, he tentatively suggests that people may (rationally?) come to faith even without evidence of revelation's credibility.[343] To support these points, he quotes Suarez and Billuart, who maintain that an interior calling can render the act of faith rationally acceptable if a convert lacks evidence.[344] He cites the same authorities as suggesting that there might be a division of epistemic labour, such that it is only necessary for educated clergy to make a judgement of credibility, which the uneducated can accept on testimony.[345] The narrative of *Loss and Gain* echoes these concessions, while maintaining that a prompt but thorough evaluation of evidence is the most reasonable path to faith. Of two Catholic converts in the novel, the first (Willis) appears to convert rashly, hardly considering the motives of credibility. He is reproached by the later convert (Charles) for rejecting reason. Charles himself lingers in Anglicanism, pondering the evidence excessively. Eventually, Charles' decision to make a "venture of faith" leads to his acceptance of supernatural faith and its concomitant certainty. In the final scene of the novel, with the two reunited as Catholics, Willis reflects that whilst he was hasty to come to faith, Charles was tardy; still, "God overrules all things".[346]

Generally, however, Newman insists upon the universal necessity of a personal judgment of credibility based on evidence. In *Discourses to Mixed Congregations* (1849), Newman acknowledges that whilst the appropriate time for an investigation of the credibility of faith varies, all should "[b]e convinced in [their] minds that the Catholic Church is a teacher sent…from God".[347] He further asserts that though scant evidence for revelation might suffice for a judgement of credibility given its antecedent probability and importance, nevertheless "[e]vidence that God has spoken you must have, else were you a prey to impostures".[348] Newman asserts this position forcefully in later papers. In 1853 he writes that "in every case, of man, woman, and child, the *credibilitas* (and therefore faith) is

[342] *"[M]otiva, ut patet, non eadem sunt omnia*"- Tristam, "Theses", 238.
[343] "*Quid quod huic vel illi ad fidem iam accedenti deesse potest magna ex parte, immo omnino, evidentia revelationem esse crediblem.* [This has an X in pencil against it]"- cf. *Ibid.*
[344] Tristam, "Theses", 239.
[345] *Ibid.*, 239.
[346] *L.G.*, 431.
[347] *Mix.* 'Faith and Doubt', 232.
[348] *Mix.* 'Mysteries of Nature and Grace', 278.

based upon reason… when the subject is too young to have reason, he is too young for faith."[349] In 1860, Newman likewise affirms that "faith, not only ought to rest upon reason as its human basis, but…cannot but so rest if it deserves the name of faith."[350] Despite occasional reservations, therefore, Newman embraces Perrone's evidentialist position, requiring an individual judgement of credibility by before the act of faith itself. Newman was aware that this position was not absolutely required of Catholics, although strongly affirmed by his Roman teachers.

After this judgement of credibility, an act of divine faith may be rationally elicited. As stated above, Newman emphasises important differences between *fides acquisita* and *fides divina*. The latter differs from the former in being essentially supernatural and non-discursive. Moreover, human faith assents to the credibility of revelation rather than to articles of faith. Divine faith is also more certain than human faith, since it excludes doubt and fear. Newman is clear that divine faith is produced by an act of the will. However, it is not clear if he has, by the 1840's, developed a precise characterisation of the mechanism by which this takes place. Newman later claims that in the generation of *fides acquisita,* the will does not directly produce certainty about the judgement of credibility. Rather, it fails to raise irrational reservations about the possibility of error, meaning that the subject readily assents to a proposition as certain by an exercise of the illative sense (see below). However, when discussing the manner in which the act of divine faith proceeds from the will, Newman's language implies that believing with divine faith is an instance of direct doxastic voluntarism. In the Theses, Newman simply explains that the will causes the assent of faith because the intellect is not compelled to believe by the motives of credibility. However, Newman elsewhere talks of the will "commanding" the act of faith[351], writing that "[f]aith then is not a conclusion from premises, but the result of an act of the *will*, following upon a *conviction* that to believe is a *duty*".[352] Thus despite having previously

[349] 'On the Certainty of Faith' (1853) Sec. 5 in *T.P.* p.27. Cf. also Sec 8 (*T.P.* p.38)- "If this pia affectio [i.e. inclination to an act of divine faith] acts without a sufficient ratio volendi or *motivum* credebilitatis, it is not supernatural".
[350] *T.P.*, 81.
[351] 'On the Nature and Cause of Faith' Pailin *The Way to Faith,* 209: the "will commands the reason to believe what it otherwise it would not believe". Cf. *T.P.*, 8: "(An act of the) The will can command (effect/create) an act or state of belief or distrust, without or contrary to this previous process of reason"
[352]Gordon Harper, *Cardinal Newman and William Froude, F.R.S.: A Correspondence* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Pres, 1933), 77.

written that the will can merely prevent an act of belief,[353] in a 1853 paper which elucidates a Scholastic analysis of faith, Newman explains that on the basis of the judgment of credentity and a desire to believe (*pia affectio*), the will generates a volition to believe, whereupon follows an act of divine faith.[354] According to the Theses, this is an "*actus liberi arbitrii*", which accordingly makes the act of faith meritorious,[355] since it does not follow automatically from the judgement of credibility.[356] It seems, therefore, that in Newman's early Catholic analysis of faith, divine faith is immediately caused by volition.

3.2 Newman's Early Catholic Theory of Faith and Reformed Epistemology

With this summary of Newman's post-conversion religious epistemology in mind, its relation to Reformed Epistemology and CRE can be examined. An obvious difference between CRE and Newman's position is that Newman at this time opts decisively (after consideration) for a moderate form of evidentialism. Anyone coming to faith must make a personal evaluation of the plausibility of the claim of the Church to teach divine revelation on the basis of evidence perceptible to natural reason. In two ways, however, Newman's thought approaches the Reformed rejection of evidentialism. Firstly, he maintains that conscience is the foundation of natural theology and appropriate examination of purported revelation. As suggested above, therefore, at the foundations of Newman's religious epistemology lies basic belief in God generated by attention to conscience. Importantly, Newman's encounter with Scholasticism causes him to view the assent of divine faith too as something like a basic belief or doxastic practice in which the believer simply believes the teaching of God through the Church, without basing such trust on "discursive" arguments. Newman's account of divine faith therefore bear important similarity to the claim of CRE that the assent of faith is not ultimately grounded in propositional evidence.

Aside from his position on the judgement of credibility, however, Newman's position in this period quite closely resembles CRE. Firstly, he claims that faith is essentially supernatural in contrast to the

[353] *T.P.* 15; cf. below.
[354] *T.P.*, 38: "[the *pia affectio*] exerts an imperium, obliging…the mind to believe without doubt or fear".
[355] *Theses*, 12.
[356] *Theses*, 239.

judgement of credibility. Further, Newman develops his previous position by affirming that faith possesses perfect certainty and rational tenacity. Finally, Newman apparently allows an immediate role for the will in producing the assent of divine faith, on the basis of a divinely infused (yet resistible) inclination to make belief in Catholic doctrine a basic epistemic practice. Newman's analysis of faith, therefore, in some ways draws closer to CRE post-conversion.

4.0 Newman's Mature Religious Epistemology

Despite his adoption of Scholastic religious epistemology, Newman continued to develop his analysis of faith throughout the following decades, with his efforts culminating in *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870). Some commentators, following Edward Sillem,[357] claim that a decisive spur towards writing was provided by Newman's correspondence with his agnostic friend William Froude, following Newman's reception of Froude's son into the Church in 1860.[358] Yet as Ker notes, Newman had never ceased to ponder the rationality of faith since his Oxford days, making the *Grammar* "in effect the work of a lifetime".[359] Still, the concerns which Froude presents in his 1860 letters are representative of the issues pre-occupying Newman, which the *Grammar* sought to resolve. Objecting to the moral prudence of Hurrell's resolution on conversion to remain steadfast in faith, Froude argues that in concrete matters one can never attain more than knowledge of what is probably true.[360] Further, one's beliefs should remain open to reversal in the light of new evidence.[361] Conversion to Catholicism, with a promise to believe with perfect certainty and rational tenacity, is therefore irrational.[362] Newman's Scholastic analysis of faith struggles to answer this difficulty. Granting that divine faith is a novel process of belief-formation which renders belief perfectly certain and rationally tenacious, from the perspective of a prospective convert who merely possesses *fides humana*, acquiring divine faith seems intellectually risky. According to Newman's early Catholic

[357] Sillem, *Philosophical Notebook,* Vol II, 58.
[358] Cf. Harper, *Cardinal Newman and William Froude,* 114-139; for the relationship between the thought of Newman and Froude, cf. Sherry, "J.H. Newman and Froude".
[359] Ian Ker, *The Achievement of John Henry Newman* (London: Collins, 1990), 54.
[360] "[In] no subject whatever- distinctly not in the region of the ordinary fact…[of] daily experience…is… [the human mind] capable of arriving at an absolutely certain conclusion". (Harper, *Cardinal Newman and William Froude*, 119).
[361] One should "be at all times ready to reconsider" the evidence for faith. *Ibid*., 120.
[362] *Ibid*., 121.

epistemology, the judgement of credibility rests on probabilistic arguments, and is "not without fear" of error.[363] From the perspective of one without divine faith, therefore, making belief in the Church's teaching a fundamental doxastic practice might place one in an epistemic position where one cannot appreciate emerging evidence against faith which should, by one's current lights, lead to its rejection. A key aim of the Grammar is to establish that "natural" reason can attain sufficient certainty regarding the judgement of credibility that one need not fear that one's judgement is incorrect or hasty. In this section, I explore the final development of Newman's religious epistemology as he addressed this difficulty. I focus particularly on the *Grammar*, which constitutes Newman's definitive position, alongside papers and letters composed whilst completing the work.

4.1 Newman on Assent and Inference

Although I have indicated Newman's principal concern in writing the *Grammar*, the work itself falls into two parts, indicating two main arguments. Newman explained to Edward Caswall that the "first part shows that you can believe what you cannot understand", whereas the latter part demonstrates "that you can believe what you cannot absolutely prove".[364] Conceptual groundwork aside, the argument of the First Part is largely separate from that of the Second. In what follows, I focus on Newman's argument in the Second Part, whilst drawing on concepts and definitions from the First.

The *Grammar* is concerned with human attitudes towards propositions, where these are understood at the fundamental level as subjects joined by the copula to predicates ("x is y").[365] In order to have an attitude to a proposition beyond incomprehension, one must "apprehend" it. Newman notes that this means that one must have an understanding of the meaning of the predicate rather than the subject, since in the case of definitions, the subject is merely a place-holder to be understood with reference to the predicate.[366] Even where one does not understand the predicate in a proposition, one can adopt a significant second-order mental attitude to the proposition. One can affirm, for example, that a proposition which one does not comprehend is true, if its truth is guaranteed by a competent

[363] Cf. *Theses*, 7/9.
[364] Ian Ker, "Editor's Introduction" in John Henry Newman, Ker (ed.) *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Oxford: OUP 2016) , xi.
[365] *G.A.*, 3.
[366] *G.A.*, 14.

authority.[367] In this way, Catholics can assent to doctrinal propositions which they cannot profess to understand. Propositions can themselves be apprehended as either "real" or "notional".[368] This distinction is difficult to elucidate, but hinges on whether the subject and predicate are considered as real objects of which the thinker has experience, or else as merely abstract *possibilia* which are the object of imagination.[369] Accordingly, the same proposition can apparently be apprehended either as (primarily) real or notional.[370] A metaphysician might have a largely notional apprehension of God and his properties, whereas a believer who experiences God through conscience and prayer has a more real apprehension. Although some assents made by believers are accordingly "notional"- in particular, assents to propositions which they cannot comprehend- assents to fundamental doctrines such as the existence of God are real, due to the immediate perception of God's existence and attributes through conscience. It is important for religious apprehensions to be in some measure "real" because real apprehensions are more vivid, and therefore more suited to yielding acts of assent and motivating spiritual transformation.

Newman delineates three important attitudes to apprehended propositions. One can doubt, infer or assent to a proposition; or else infer or assent to its contrary.[371] To doubt a proposition, which is incompatible with inferring or assenting to it, is to neither believe it nor its contrary. In inferring a proposition, one believes it "conditionally"- i.e. because it follows logically or probabilistically from further beliefs.[372] When one assents to a position, by contrast, one believes it "unconditionally". By this, Newman principally means that one does not believe it on the basis of other propositions; rather it is like a basic belief, bearing its own epistemic weight. Newman's meaning is brought out by a

[367] *G.A.*, 15-6.
[368] *G.A.*, .9-12.
[369] This is complicated by Newman's inclination to nominalism, which causes him to cash out the distinction as hinging on whether the terms of the proposition stand for individual, extra-mental *concreta* (objects of "real apprehension"), or else common, mind-dependent *abstracta* (objections of "notional apprehension").
[370] *G.A.*, 98.
[371] *G.A.*, 3-8.
[372] Newman is not consistent on this point. Later in the *Grammar* (168), Newman seems to think it enough for inference that one deems a propositions probable in light of one's set of beliefs even if one nevertheless refrains from belief in the proposition in question.

paper of 1853, where he writes that a proposition "when viewed as a subjective of certainty [i.e. assent], stands absolute and as a first principle and starting point, as if with an axiomatic force".[373]

When Newman portrays assent as "unconditional", he also means that it is "absolute", since it does not admit of "degrees" (of credence).[374] Although Newman draws an analogy between assent and basic belief in "first principles", he does not mean that most acts of assent are properly basic in a manner comparable to belief in an external world, which one never comes to believe on the basis of other beliefs. Rather, "inference is ordinarily the antecedent of assent" which nevertheless does not interfere "with the unconditional character of the assent, viewed in itself".[375] Newman gives examples of propositions which are widely believed in this manner, such as that Great Britain is an island, that we shall die, and that India exists.[376] Such beliefs are not basic in the same way as belief in an external world, since they are or have been inferred from other beliefs (in the testimony of cartographers, previous deaths etc.).[377] Yet Newman notes that whilst most people could give *some* reasons for these beliefs if pressed, many would struggle to articulate the evidence precisely, suggesting that they no longer believe on the basis of this evidence.[378] Further indication that we hold to these beliefs in a "basic" way is provided, by the fact that we hold these beliefs with certainty, whereas our evidence only renders them highly probable.[379] In assenting, therefore, we incorporate beliefs into our epistemic foundations as certainties on which we base our further reasoning. This need not preclude, however, such beliefs having been once held to by inference, or reflection on their evidential support.

Assent itself can be an almost subconscious matter, inculcated by what Newman terms "implicit" reasoning.[380] Often, however, we assent deliberately, or reflect by a further act of assent that our previous subconscious assents have been appropriately made. Newman terms such "reflex" (i.e.

[373] *T.P.*, 14.
[374] Cf. *G.A.*, Ch VI *passim* (157-209).
[375] *G.A.*, 157; *Ibid.* 171 for the rational necessity of inference preceding assent.
[376] *G.A.*, 177-181; 294-301. Cf. *T.P.*, 20; 88; 129-30.
[377] One might object that if non-reductive accounts of testimony hold, the testimony of others as to the insularity of Britain and the existence of India can be accepted as basic. Yet Newman's examples of the certainty of death, of the presence of unspoken emotions in others are examples of assent not gained through testimony.
[378] *G.A.*189-90.
[379] *G.A.*, 295-6.
[380] *G.A.*, 213.

second order) assents, when true, acts of "certitude",[381] which constitute "knowledge".[382] Hugo Meynell observes, therefore, that certitude is a factive mental state, typically characterised by a feeling of intellectual satisfaction.[383] Like other assents, acts of certitude are perfectly certain. Controversially, Newman also maintains that acts of certitude are "indefectible"- i.e. perfectly rationally tenacious.[384] One might think, therefore, that certitudes receive a boost in rational tenacity, over and above the perfect level of credence typical of assent. Jamie M. Ferreira, however, convincingly argues that this interpretation is false.[385] Newman admits examples of apparent certitudes, which turn out to be incorrect[386] and likewise the possibility of losing a real certitude. He further claims that it is not *inconceivable* that something which one believes to be certain should be false; the possibility of disproof just seems practically remote.[387] Since assent does not admit of degrees, however, defeaters for a reflex assent do not gradually reduce credence in the relevant belief whilst it remains an assent, but rather suddenly prevent the mind from assenting to it (though perhaps the belief will remain as an inference or 'opinion').[388] Newman's suggestion that certitudes cannot fail perhaps stems from confusion between what is actually true and merely perceived as such. Plausibly, he thinks that since certitude is factive, when we cease to believe that a proposition is true, we necessarily come believe that our belief in that proposition was never a real certitude. Thus, he writes that assent "without permanence…is a mere conviction",[389] where conviction is reflex assent capable of falsity.[390] Given that the rational tenacity of certitudes need not be *perfect*, therefore, I suggest that expectation that one's certitudes will not fail is on Newman's account simply a function of the believer's level of credence in the proposition, and belief in the appropriateness of her position.

[381] *G.A.*, 189-90; *T.P.*, 7;127.
[382] *G.A.*, 196.
[383] Meynell, "Newman's Vindication of Faith", 258.
[384] *G.A.*, 221.
[385] Ferreira, *Doubt and Religious Commitment*, 106-29.
[386] E.g. *G.A.* 255; 258.
[387] *T.P.* 122.
[388] *T.P.*, 123.
[389] *G.A.*, 258.
[390] *G.A.*, 221.

As Newman himself realised when deciding to compose the *Grammar*, however, acts of certitude are therefore species of assent, and so Newman's defence of the permissibility of certitude largely rests on his arguments for the legitimacy of assent. [391]

4.2 Newman's Defence of Assent as Certain

The claim that assent is a legitimate species of belief with a perfect level of credence, but related to inference, is key to the *Grammar*. Newman realises that his contention flies in the face of much of the empiricist philosophical tradition, including Butler that's adage "probability is the guide of life", and Locke's position that it is irrational to "entertain any proposition with greater assurance than the proofs it is built on will warrant".[392] In particular, Newman examines three objections to his characterisation of assent. The first is that assent which follows inference is really just an inference itself, and so should, like many inferred beliefs, often lack perfect certainty.[393] The second objection is that even if frequently, acts of assent which possesses a higher degree of credence than the inferred belief, these assents are epistemically deficient.[394] The final objection holds that even if assent is sometimes permissible, religious beliefs are likely not genuine examples of certitude, because of widespread disagreement over religious matters.[395] Examining these objections, and Newman's rejoinders, will help to clarify Newman's account of assent and its relation to inference.

The first objection suggests that whereas Newman claims that in assenting to a proposition we incorporate it into our noetic foundations, in reality we unconsciously infer it from other beliefs. On this account, "while the disposition of my mind towards a given proposition is identical in assent and in inference, I merely drop the thought of the premises when I assent, and not of their influence on the proposition inferred".[396] In other words, assent is unconscious inference. Against this, Newman makes two arguments. Principally, he stresses that there are many examples where an act of assent endures

[391] *A.W.*, 70.
[392] *G.A.*, 108.
[393] *G.A.*, 165.
[394] *G.A.*, 160.
[395] *G.A.*, 224.
[396] *G.A.*, 165.

without an act of inference, and vice versa.[397] Often, for example, we have forgotten the evidence on which the original inference was made, yet still believe a proposition. By contrast, it is possible to fail or cease to believe a proposition even if one sees that it accords with one's other beliefs, perhaps because of a desire not to believe (cf. below). Admittedly, Newman's arguments are not fully persuasive. The latter examples showing that inference can persist without assent are not really apt, as his dialectical opponent is claiming that assent is a species of inference, and not that all inferences constitute acts of assent. Further, regarding Newman's claim that assents can be made on the basis of forgotten certitudes, perhaps what occurs here is a form of diachronic inference, whereby the justification one has for one's present belief is dependent on a prior inference. Newman might himself admit something similar when he claims that assents should be preceded by acts of inference. Yet Newman wishes to claim that propositions assented to are qualitatively different from propositions believed by inference not only in their synchronic relation to other beliefs, but also in their absolute certainty. Merely showing that beliefs which are a matter of assent can lack "synchronic" grounding in other beliefs will not demonstrate that such beliefs are typically or rationally held with greater certainty than when the same proposition was believed by an antecedent act of inference. This will particularly be the case if it is possible to assent to propositions without holding them with a perfect level of credence.

Newman himself claims that assent is *necessarily* certain belief, on the basis that it is not directly inferred from other premises.[398] However, one might follow H.H. Price in disputing this point.[399] Surely we hold to beliefs with a variety of degrees of certainty, and likewise rational credence. This is evinced by our talk about of being more/less confident in particular beliefs, and holding that certain propositions which we believe are more/less probable. It seems possible, moreover, that basic or quasi-basic beliefs might be held with varying degrees of certainty as much as beliefs held by inference. However, it is important to note that although Newman contends that Locke is wrong to hold that there are degrees of assent, there is room in his system for something akin to degrees of

[397] *G.A.*, 167-71.
[398] *G.A.*, 172-6.
[399] H.H. Price, *Belief: The Gifford Lectures Delivered at the University of Aberdeen in 1960* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), 130-54.

assent.[400] One species of notional assent which Newman discusses in Part I is opinion, which is an assent to the probability of a proposition. On Newman's account, therefore, talk of beliefs with less than perfect levels of credence can be translated into the "opinion" that the relevant proposition has some degree of probability. Further, Newman allows that although acts of assent are "absolute", they can be elicited with varying "vigour, keenness and directness".[401] Since he admits a distinction between acts and habits of belief, there may be "half-assents", where a belief does not enter into one's noetic structure with permanence or stability. [402] Newman recognises that due to the role of the will in assent, even those with a habit of assent can feel irrational difficulties in eliciting acts of belief due to fear of being wrong or attendant consequences.

Further, although Newman does not make the point himself, he could have distinguished between certainty and rational tenacity as properties of belief. We have seen that Newman admits that assents are reversible despite being perfectly certain. Different assents, moreover, would require more or less extravagant evidence as defeaters. To rationally cease believing in the faithfulness of a friend, for example, I would require less evidence than that needed to convince me that Britain is not insular. Talk of degrees in confidence in assents, therefore, might partly be based on the insight that defeaters for some beliefs only exist in what subjects take to be distant possible worlds. Coming to believe in such defeaters would involve large changes in their epistemic structure. In this way, believers might feel more confident about the rational tenacity of such beliefs than other assents, since they can scarcely even imagine these beliefs being wrong. As Newman suggests, we struggle to take seriously possibilities which we struggle to imagine.[403] Given Newman's concessions to the language of levels of credence, however, we might still wonder whether "assent"- i.e. quasi-basic belief which is perfectly certain- is rational. Perhaps instead, our quasi-basic beliefs should have the same strength as their parent inferences.

[400] Before writing the Grammar, Newman talked straight-forwardly of degrees of assent- cf. *Apo.*, 39.
[401] *T.P.*, 32.
[402] *G.A.*, 175.
[403] *T.P.*, 84.

Newman's second line of reply to the objection that assent is not really distinct from inference, however, cuts to the heart of his epistemological project. Newman simply observes that there are many beliefs which we seem to hold in a quasi-basic manner with a higher degree of certainty than we admit the evidence warrants.[404] As noted above, examples include belief in the insularity of Britain, our certainty of death, and the emotional states of others. Given that these beliefs possess greater certainty than the evidence in their favour directly warrants, one can apparently postulate that "assent" is a distinct action from even "diachronic" inference, whereby a belief is accorded its own independent degree of credence beyond that derived from other beliefs. Although Ferreira argues that Newman thereby strongly separates the act of assent from inference,[405] a more plausible interpretation is that even when one assents- or at least, when one reflectively affirms one's assent as certain- one must affirm that *some* evidence, justified one in coming to assent to the proposition, even if one cannot elucidate it. In a paper of 1853, Newman writes that he would renounce belief that Louis Napoleon was King of France "directly that any ground for believing failed me, but not till then".[406] This suggests that whilst Newman's belief did not rest on any particular piece of evidence, it did depend upon his perception that his belief was or had been formed as an appropriate evaluation of evidence. Similarly, Newman suggests that "prejudices" (assents formed without a serious evaluation of the evidence in their favour) do not properly amount to "certitudes", and may be altered upon further examination of evidence.[407] Whilst a belief which is the object of considered assent does not synchronically depend for justification upon any other particular beliefs relevant to its truth, it does rest on the belief that there is sufficient evidence to warrant assent.[408]

Newman also takes this as an important line of reply to the second objection to his account of assent: that even if assents are given as he claims, their certainty is irrationally disproportionate to their evidential support. In response, Newman suggests that our standards for rationality ought to derive more from our natural intellectual habits than from *a priori* theories about the relations which our

[404] *G.A.* 176.
[405] Ferreira, "Doubt and Religious Commitment", 76-87.
[406] *T.P.*, 6.
[407] *G.A.*, 187.
[408] One might wonder whether this belief itself must be a matter of inference (at least, diachronically), undermining Newman's distinction between assent and inference. I address this issue in the next sub-section.

levels of credence should have to evidence.[409] Newman gives two particular reasons for believing that assent is a legitimate intellectual act. Firstly, he asserts (in a manner similar to Wittgenstein) that if assent is an unavoidable intellectual practice, it is impossible to seriously call its rationality into question, since our natural intellectual tendencies necessarily constitute our sense of what's rational.[410] This argument is not entirely convincing without development. It is not obvious that assent as Newman envisages it is a fundamental practice which we could not try to eliminate. Perhaps we could see that assent is incompatible with intuitively compelling evidentialist standards of rationality without making use of assent in such perception. However, one might charitably read Newman as making tacit use of something like a "Moorean shift". Newman recognises that if Locke's constraints on rational degrees of credence always being proportionate to evidence hold, the degree of credence with which we believe propositions including "Britain is insular" is inappropriate.[411] Yet since these assents and their certainty seem intuitively appropriate, Locke's constraints should be abandoned rather than such assents.[412] As William Wainwright notes, the move from the naturalness of assent to its permissibility is not straightforward given Newman's acknowledgement that our habitual intellectual practices can be disordered (e.g. by sin).[413] Still, Newman holds that beliefs are rationally permissible if formed in accordance with our natural cognitive design plan, maintaining that in assenting "we are not violating the laws of our nature, as if they were themselves an extravagance or weakness, but are acting according to it, according to its legitimate constitution".[414] Newman argues that in practice, this means following our natural constitution as given in God's design plan. Such plans are "as a general law" followed by creatures, meaning that the pervasiveness of assent is grounds to presume its rationality.[415] Since our faculties tell us of the existence of God, they confirm

[409] *G.A.*, 160, 176, 343.
[410] Cf. *G.A.*, 346-8.
[411] *G.A.*, 294-6.
[412] In this vein, a paper of 1853 suggests that evidentialism which forbids certainty in concrete propositions (e.g. that Louis-Napoleon was king of France) is intuitively ridiculous: "And if some officious philosopher came and told me…that I must not believe beyond my grounds…and that it would be safer to take it as practically certain than speculatively, I should laugh in his face…". *T.P.*, 6. Cf. *G.A.*, 160.
[413] Wainwright, *Reason and the Heart*, 76.
[414] He further comments: "our duty is, not to abstain from the exercise of any function of our nature, but to do what is in itself right rightly".
[415] *G.A.*, 348.

their own reliability[416] and (in an "externalist" sense) the justification of their use. Newman might be taken to imply, moreover, that assent in particular can be a belief-forming practice which confirms its own warrant insofar as he believes (in part, as a matter of his assent to the judgement of credibility) that it is necessary for the certainty and rational tenacity which faith requires.

I now consider the final objection to Newman's account. This is that religious diversity and fluidity in religious opinions suggest that religious beliefs are not certitudes formed an epistemically appropriate response to the truth, but rather "prejudices". If there was sufficient rational basis for Christianity, it would be near universally appreciated. In modern terms, we might phrase the objection as suggesting that humans cannot- or do not- reliably form truthful religious assents, and that accordingly such assents cannot be justified, if justification depends on "reliability". Newman gives several arguments to the effect that the diversity of religious opinions does not show that religious assents are not formed as an appropriate response to truth.[417] Firstly, he claims that the global diversity of opinions on cosmological matters does not show that modern scientific beliefs lack justification. Rather, access to better evidence and training makes the findings of Western science more reliable than those of pre-scientific speculation. By analogy, the epistemic resources afforded by the gospel, and the evidence for its credibility, enable Christians to appropriately form true religious beliefs.[418] One might object that Newman's agnostic contemporaries also had access to similar epistemic resources. Newman makes two further points, therefore, about religious disagreement in Christian cultures. Newman speculates that many of the acts of assent on religious matters (as opposed to mere probabilistic inferences) made in Christian cultures are appropriately formed as a response to the truth, even if they are misinterpreted or lead to further, false conclusions. Thus, for example, a Protestant might with justification assent to the authority of Scripture, but then falsely infer the principle of *sola scriptura*. That acts of firm assent in religious matters (as opposed to inferences) are fairly few is borne out by

[416] *G.A.*, 347; 351: "I should be bound by [my natural cognitive functions] even were they not His laws; but since one of their very functions is to tell me of Him, they throw a reflex light upon themselves, and, for resignation to my destiny, I substitute a cheerful concurrence in an overruling Providence."
[417] *G.A.*, 240f.
[418] *G.A.*, 242.

the experience of those who, like Newman[419], move between religions without losing such assents, because they see their fundamental beliefs as better accommodated by new creeds. Newman is confident, therefore, that those in a propitious intellectual environment where the gospel is preached, who without prejudice examine religious matters and follow their conscience, can reliably form true religious beliefs.

We can now recap Newman's understanding of assent. Assent is quasi-basic belief in a proposition: i.e. belief which does not synchronically derive justification from a subject's other beliefs; at least, other than that there is some unspecified evidence supporting that proposition. It is not a basic belief in the normal sense, however, because diachronically it may have been inferred from other beliefs. An act of assent possesses a perfect degree of credence, although assents can be made to the probability of propositions, and are not made with equal vigour. Consequently, assent is often stronger than is apparently warranted by the evidence in its favour- particularly, evidence which a believer can elucidate. It is perfectly natural for humans to make assents, and epistemically permissible since in assenting our cognitive faculties can function properly, according to God's design. Assents can be falsely made on inadequate evidence or unwisely suppressed given adequate evidence, particularly in adverse epistemic environments or due to affective factors. Yet providing one takes care to reason properly and avoid mistakes, one can possess sufficient confidence that one has assented correctly to warrant certitude about a proposition.

4.3 Newman on the Formation of Assent

If religious assents are neither properly basic nor directly inferred from other beliefs, one might wonder how they are rationally formed. In this sub-section, I discuss Newman's analysis of the rational formation of assents by the faculty or collection of faculties which he terms the "illative sense".

Newman rejects the possibility that the mind assents to the credibility of the Catholic faith or other "concrete" matters following an inference to its truth consisting of neat, communicable syllogistic

[419] Cf. *Apo.*, 64.

reasoning ("formal inference"), whether inductive or deductive. Several considerations prevent assent typically following upon formal inference. Firstly, even simple syllogisms bearing upon concrete matters often assume a complex set of antecedent presumptions which determine the prior probability of premises, and which cannot easily be enunciated. Newman cites as an example the difficult matter of deciding the credibility to give to sources in historical research.[420] The weighting of such presumptions, often the product of complex considerations, is rarely a matter of conscious reflection by one making subsequent use of them in reasoning. Foreshadowing Plantinga, Newman notes that these basic presumptions are not universal, nor is there any way of showing that they are properly basic by formal reasoning.[421] Further, Newman suggests that whilst syllogisms are suitable for reasoning about abstract matters of metaphysics or statistical generalities, they are ill-suited to represent the complicated set of reasons which influence conclusions in particular, empirical matters. This is firstly the case because syllogisms tend to generalise (e.g. all men will die), whereas particular considerations may tell against an individual matter falling under the rubric of the premises (say, we are considering a prophet such as Elijah). Further, a complex set of arguments often bears on the premises of the argument under consideration. Newman considers, for example, a Protestant pondering a syllogism with the premise "All Protestants ought to convert to Catholicism". The Protestant will have to consider the truth of the premise by weighing up many arguments for and against the Church's authority, and to consider their bearing upon himself as an individual Protestant. This would be difficult to represent on paper, and is rather considered subconsciously by a process of "informal" reasoning, carried out by a faculty or set of cognitive capacities which he dubs the "illative sense". [422]

More fundamentally, however, Newman suggests that "formal" reasoning cannot lead to assent, since its conclusions are only *probable* in force,[423] except in the case of logical deductions from premises

[420] *G.A.*, 376.
[421] *G.A.*, 363-672, 376-81; cf. 179.
[422] *G.A.*, 288.
[423] *G.A.*, 283.

which are necessarily true.[424] Logical argument may play some role in the act of reasoning which precedes assent. Although much of the reasoning preceding an act of assent is "implicit" and subconscious, it both incorporates conscious logical argumentation, and fills in the details necessary to apply logic to the question at hand.[425] In a famous passage, Newman describes the process of "informal reasoning" by which the mind reasons to form assents on "concrete" matters:

"It is by the strength, variety or multiplicity of premises, which are only probable, not by well-connected syllogisms,- by objections overcome, by adverse theories neutralised, by difficulties gradually clearing up, by exceptions proving the rule, by unlooked-for correlations found for received truths, by suspense and delay in the process issuing in triumphant re-actions,- by all these ways, and many others, the practiced and experienced mind is able to make a sure divination that a conclusion is inevitable, of which his lines of reasoning do not actually put him in possession. This is what is meant by a proposition being 'as good as proved'... and the reasons for it 'amounting to a proof,' for a proof is the limit of probabilities.".[426]

Several observations should be made on this passage. As Wainwright suggests, the kind of reasoning which Newman believes precedes assent is best described in modern terms as 'inference to the best explanation', whereby a mass of data is explained by a theory which has theoretical virtues over rival explanations, and is thus taken to be true. [427] According to Meynell, such reasoning is used in both every-day and scientific thought.[428] In this vein, Newman writes that in informal reasoning, "we decide, not that the conclusion must be, but that it cannot be otherwise",[429] and quotes Butler to the effect that in informal reasoning, it is seen that "the whole of the acknowledged events taken together could not in reason be supposed to have happened, unless the disputed one [i.e. the hypothesis] were true".[430] Further, the "illative sense" is said to play an active part in amassing and analysing data

[424] Note that in this respect, Newman is sceptical of claims that induction offers a certain "proof" of future events- cf. *T.P.*, 19.
[425] *G.A.*, 292.
[426] *G.A.*, 321.
[427] Wainwright, *Reason and the Heart*, 57.
[428] Meynell, "Newman's Vindication", 48.
[429] *G.A.*, 317.
[430] *G.A.*, 319.

throughout this process.[431] Wainwright identifies three roles for the illative sense in "informal reasoning".[432] Firstly, the illative sense assembles and interprets the evidence which bears upon a given proposition, which Newman terms "the statement of the case".[433] Secondly, it assesses relevant background probabilities and assumptions relevant to assessing this proposition's truth.[434] Finally, the illative sense synthesises the marshalled evidence to determine its force.[435] Whilst this synthesis of the evidence may be preceded by careful examination of individual arguments for/against the proposition, Newman stresses that in its last analysis, the illative sense evaluates all the evidence together ("*per modum unius*") in an act of informal inference which may lead to assent.

Although Newman would have granted that there exist commonly recognised explanatory virtues marking out candidates as "best explanations", he stresses that the amount of evidence which it takes to convince an individual of the truth of a theory by such a process of informal reasoning varies. Usually, it will be possible for further evidence to be provided in confirmation of a hypothesis, as when further witnesses can come forward at trial. Often, however, after a certain amount of evidence, those considering a theory will consider it "as good as proved",[436] whence further evidence for the hypothesis will hardly increase their degree of credence in it. Since the mass of evidence for a hypothesis is often difficult to articulate, and its evaluation dependent on the action of each individual's illative sense, there is "no common measure" between minds when assessing whether a body of data lends decisive support to a hypothesis.[437] However, as Wainwright notes, this does not mean that Newman makes "informal" reasoning a purely subjective matter.[438] Although there is no internally accessible guarantee that one is correctly evaluating evidence in a given case, the "illative sense" is like the mechanism of a clock which may function properly or misfire.[439] Thus whereas certain arguments "often" and "ought to" convince, certain intuitions should be dismissed as the products of mistaken reasoning. By contrast, "experience" in reasoning and the cultivation of virtue

[431] *G.A.*, 356.
[432] Wainwright, *Reason and the Heart,* 58-62.
[433] *G.A.*, 366.
[434] *G.A.*, 370.
[435] *G.A.*, 375.
[436] *G.A.*, 321.
[437] *G.A.*, 362.
[438] Wainwright, *Reason and the Heart,* 65-9.
[439] *G.A.*, 233.

can promote the proper function of the intellect. One can often be reassured that one is reasoning correctly in a given area if others well qualified in these respects reason in similar ways. In short, although "informal reasoning" is always a personal judgement, which explains and renders permissible the phenomenon of disagreement, it is to some extent communicable and collaborative.

One might wonder what constitutes the relation between "informal" reasoning and assent. Newman himself is unclear on this point, writing that "the mind progresses in concrete matter…from merely probable antecedents to the sufficient proof of a fact…and after the proof, to an act of certitude".[440] One interpretation of Newman would be that assent is just a legitimate conclusion of forceful arguments to the best explanation. Having perceived the evidence, the mind judges that a certain hypothesis is the only viable explanation of the relevant data, and adopts an attitude of certainty towards the proposition. It further judges that the question is settled, so that this certainty is retained if the inference is forgotten or challenged. In support of this contention, note that the passage just quoted is Newman's gloss on a series of examples where certainty is the appropriate conclusion of evaluating cumulative evidence.

There might be two objects to this interpretation. The first would be that since inference to the best explanation is based on data, any belief produced by such reasoning would be an inference rather than an assent. Note, however, that in inference to the best explanation one's inference is not based on a single piece of data; nor can one necessarily elucidate precisely how the data supports one's inference. I argued above that for Newman, the independence of assent from inference is best understood as the affirmation that a proposition which is assented to is not synchronically supported by a particular set of propositions, although the believer ought to maintain that her assent was once generated by some sufficient "motives of credibility". In this sense, certainty which is the conclusion of "informal" inference will remain importantly distinct from "formal" inference, in which a proposition is synchronically believed on the basis of particular evidence.

[440] *G.A.*, 329.

Secondly, one might follow Lamont in arguing that on this interpretation, assent which involves perfect certainty can never be given on the basis of inference to the best explanation, since such an inference at best renders a theory highly probable.[441] Yet Lamont forgets Newman's consistent insistence that certitude is a property of minds rather than propositions considered as conclusions of probabilistic reasoning.[442] This means that the illative sense accepts propositions with a degree of credence "beyond their degree of probability, considered as conclusions from premises".[443] In this respect, it is useful to consider Newman's image of the relationship between evidence and certainty in informal inference as akin to "a regular polygon, inscribed in a circle, [which] its sides being continually diminished, tends to become that circle, as its limit; but it vanishes before it has coincided with the circle".[444] Analogously, evidence in favour of concrete propositions accumulates to make the conclusion increasingly probable, without ever making it certain. The spontaneous function of the intellect, rather than probabilistic reasoning, embraces the proposition as certain. Whilst Lockean evidentialists will reject this procedure as irrational, this further shows how an act of certitude resulting from informal inference remains separate from the perception of particular evidence in favour of the proposition believed. One might separate the act of certain belief ("assent") from the preceding judgement of evidential support tending towards certainty ("inference").

There is, however, one necessary step between the appreciation that a sufficient proof for an assent or certitude exists and the subsequent act of assent: the consent of the will. Although some commentators have suggested that the Grammar espouses direct doxastic voluntarism, Ferreira persuasively argues that Newman holds to a more nuanced position on which the will can immediately prevent assent following a strong inference, but not command assent in its absence.[445] This becomes clear from a paper of 1853, where Newman argues that the will, "though it cannot create (force) certainty, can stifle it".[446] Newman's point is that whereas the mind must be drawn by the illative sense to assent to a proposition in virtue of apprehending the cumulative evidence in its

[441] Lamont, "Newman on Faith", 74.
[442] Harper, *Cardinal Newman and William Froude*, 201; cf. *G.A.*, 180.
[443] Harper, *Cardinal Newman and William Froude*, 203.
[444] *G.A.*, 320.
[445] Jaimie Ferreira, "Newman and the 'Ethics of Belief'", *Religious Studies* 19 (3) (1983), 364.
[446] *T.P.*, 15.

favour, the will may thwart the mind's natural progression to assent. This happens when for affective reasons, the will leads the mind to focus on the minute probability that the evidence is false or defeasible which the mind normally lays aside in assent, so that "the will could so act upon the mind as to make that microscopic objection an occasion of morbid doubt".[447] Newman, therefore, does not argue that we can believe anything we wish to, but merely that since certitude involves the illative sense bestowing a greater level of credence upon a proposition than the evidence in its favour warrants, the will to disbelieve can prevent this action.

4.4 The Formation of Christian Belief

In the final chapter of the Grammar, Newman applies his theory of assent to belief (*fides acquisita*) in the truth of Christianity, by giving an apologetic argument which strongly resembles that sketched in U.S. Briefly reviewing Newman's arguments will show how, in his later works, Newman envisaged a convert making a judgement of credibility. Newman is careful to note that since reasoning is an intensely personal process, he merely intends to outline which arguments for Christianity he himself finds persuasive.[448] Newman starts by emphasising the importance of belief in the prior probability of divine revelation for the judgement of credibility. Recapping his argument for the existence of God earlier in the Grammar and U.S., Newman illustrates how attention to the dictates of conscience fosters "natural" belief in the existence of a morally perfect, omniscient Judge and the hope that He will provide humanity with a remedy for our sinful condition. [449] These beliefs are naturally gained by those imbued with the correct "moral sentiments" through fidelity to conscience. Newman then sketches an argument for the truth of Christianity which is not a strict logical demonstration, but rather an argument of similar structure to those discussed previously in the Grammar (i.e. inference to the best explanation).[450] Unlike Paley, Newman does not argue from the occurrence of miracles, which might theoretically be appreciated by those lacking "natural" religious belief. Rather, he draws attention to the unique manner in which the gospel promises to deliver humanity from sin in line with

[447] *L.D.* XVIII, 334 (1858).
[448] *G.A.*, 384-387; 409-13; 424-7.
[449] *G.A.*, 389-408.
[450] *G.A.*, 430-91.

the expectations of natural religion.[451] Christianity is a better candidate that Islam or Eastern religions for such an anticipated revelation, given their lack of a new, existentially transformative message.[452] Only Judaism and Christianity, which promise a distinctive, universal revelation and restoration of God's rule, are plausible candidates for a true divine revelation. The truth of Christianity in particular is demonstrated by its fulfilment of Judaism's promises and its rapid growth. This came about not primarily due to economic or social conditions, but because early Christians perceived the gospel as the expected answer to the human need for deliverance from sin and death.[453] The perception of Christianity's morally transformative power still functions as a decisive motive of credibility to those with prior belief in the likelihood of revelation.

In the above argument, we see many of the elements of assent which Newman sketches in the Grammar. The judgement of credibility, on this account, is arrived at by a process of inference to the best explanation, which starts with a series of assumptions which are rational but not universally accepted. Acting on these assumptions, the believer perceives a mass of data about Christianity, of which she has a "real" apprehension as a system which is existentially relevant. If, as a humble investigator hoping for divine revelation she is willing to assess the evidence fairly, with a properly functioning "illative sense", she will form a natural and certain judgement that the gospel is true.

4.5 Divine Faith in the Grammar

Avery Dulles asserts that Newman's mature analysis of faith, as sketched above, is a development of material from the U.S., which draws little from the Scholastic religious epistemology which Newman adopted upon conversion.[454] Yet whilst many facets of the illative sense have parallels in Newman's earlier notion of "implicit" reasoning from antecedent probabilities, Newman notably retains in the Grammar the distinction between divine and human faith. Newman seems to imply in both the Grammar and private papers that the "certitude" arrived at after considering the evidence in favour of

[451] *G.A.*, 430.
[452] *Ibid*.
[453] *G.A.*, 456-64.
[454] Avery Dulles, "From Images to Truth: Newman on Revelation and Faith", *Theological Studies* 51 (2) (1990), 264; cf. Thomas Norris, "Newman's Approach to the Act of Faith in the Light of the Catholic Dogmatic Tradition" *Irish Theological Quarterly* 69 (2004), 250.

Christianity is not the assent of divine faith; nor does Newman's analysis of the illative sense explain the latter.[455] Maintaining his position in the *Theses,* Newman asserts that divine faith differs from this "human" certitude in two ways. Firstly, as John Connolly argues,[456] divine faith has both a different formal object from human faith, and a different material object: human faith is an assent to the judgement that Christianity is credible, rather to its doctrines they are divinely revealed.[457] Secondly, Newman reaffirms that divine faith, due to its essentially supernatural nature, enjoys greater certainty and rational tenacity than human faith.[458] Given Newman's insistence in the Grammar that natural assents are perfectly certain and need not involve "fear" of being deceived,[459] this is admittedly difficult to comprehend. Newman accordingly suggests that the greater certainty and rational tenacity of divine faith is "not a matter of experience, but is above experience".[460]

Given that Newman still distinguishes between human and divine faith in the Grammar, it is important to consider how his new analysis of natural assent relates to divine faith. Ferreira, together with Fey,[461] suggests that Newman does not analyse divine faith in the Grammar. Yet Ferreira also holds that Newman's account of divine faith would likely not differ from his account of the formation of natural assents.[462] Ferreira admits that the evidence in favour of her reading is limited. In its support she firstly suggests that human and divine faith share the same material object, although she only cites Newman's statement that they have different formal objects. [463] Secondly, she draws attention to parallels between human and divine faith, since on Newman's account, both require the co-operation of the will. Such a parallel does show that by the time of the Grammar, Newman's notion of natural assent had come to resemble his earlier notion of divine faith in terms of structure and properties. Yet this is hardly reason to equate Newman's models of *fides acquisita* and *fides divina*. Finally, she argues that Newman seems to admit in papers preparing the Grammar that Christians may reasonably

[455] *G.A.*, 100, 187; *T.P*,.16, 86.
[456] John Connolly, "Newman on Human Faith and Divine Faith: Clarifying some Ambiguities", *Horizons* 23 (2) (1996).
[457] Connolly suggests that Newman's position becomes clearer in his later writings- cf. *T.P.*, 37, 139.
[458] *G.A.*, 186-7.
[459] *G.A.*, 193: "To incur a risk is not to expect a reverse".
[460] *G.A.*, 186.
[461] Fey, *Faith and Doubt*, 179,
[462] Ferreira, *Doubt and Commitment*, 130-45.
[463] *G.A.*, 99.

relinquish their assent in the face of decisive defeaters. However, it should be noted that in at least some papers, Newman clearly confines himself to a consideration of the role of natural reason in faith.[464] Further, Newman himself suggests in the Grammar that assents of divine faith have a "special self-protection beyond…ordinary laws of human thought", citing Amort to the effect that those with divine faith will not be shaken by defeaters.[465]

There are reasons to reject Ferreira's interpretation. Firstly, it would require Newman to have changed his mind since writing the *Theses*, which is unlikely given that Newman produced several copies after writing the Grammar. Secondly, Connolly's contention that the two species of faith have different material objects undermines Ferreira's argument that there is no difference between them besides the presence of grace. In papers of 1853, Newman states that evaluating cumulative evidence in favour of a proposition with one's *prudentia* merely leads to the conclusion that the proposition is credible, rather than true.[466] If Newman retains this position, it would follow that divine faith, which involves assent to revelation itself, could not result from the action of the illative sense. Admittedly, in the Grammar, Newman discusses natural assents generated by the illative sense to the *truth* of propositions. However, in a paper of 1877, Newman confirms his 1853 position, writing that "the assent of the mind as given to the *conclusion* of the motiva which lead to faith...is an assent to its credibility".[467] Newman also considers the possibility that the conclusion drawn from the motives is merely to the fact that there is a revelation, rather than that there is a revelation with particular contents. In short, whilst it is not entirely clear that Newman retained the Scholastic distinction between human faith based on evidence and "basic" divine faith, this position seems probable. Accordingly, I suggest that the analysis of religious assent in the Grammar should be taken as a fresh analysis of human faith, which is merely a *sine qua non* for basic divine faith.

[464] *T.P.*, 16, 86.
[465] *G.A.*, 186-7.
[466] *T.P.*, 25, 37.
[467] *T.P.*, 139.

4.6 The Grammar and Reformed Epistemology

In light of this discussion of Newman's mature religious epistemology, it is now apposite to consider its resemblance to Reformed Epistemology and CRE. Since I have argued that the Grammar's epistemology is pertinent to the discussion of *fides acquisita* rather than *fides divina*, it would be possible to merely re-echo my analysis of Newman's early Catholic epistemology. According to that analysis, Newman approaches the Reformed position that Christian beliefs can be properly basic, but retains enough evidentialism to require a judgement of credibility on the basis of evidence (of which the Grammar gives a fresh analysis).

Still, it is worth considering how Newman's religious epistemology would compare to Reformed Epistemology if, as Ferreira suggests, the analysis of human faith given in the Grammar also applied to divine faith. This may prove interesting because Newman's analysis of human faith in the Grammar tends to make redundant the supposition that divine faith is formed in a *sui generis* manner. According to the Grammar, quotidian human assents have perfect rational credence, are highly rationally tenacious, and subject to the co-operation of the will. Thus in his later work, Newman can no longer make the argument of the *Theses* that divine faith cannot be directly generated by human motives because of its perfect degree of certainty/rational tenacity.[468] Since Newman suggests throughout his writings that grace may aid even apparently "natural" religious assents, on Ferreira's reading, he could also foreshadow Rousselot in suggesting that all assents of faith are gracious, despite resembling other natural assents. Newman therefore anticipates, in his mature Catholic thought, a distinctive analysis of faith which might account for all the properties of faith, without any appeal to a habit of divine faith with which the practice of Catholic faith becomes basic. I shall now, therefore, explore the similarity between such a development of Newman's thought and Reformed Epistemology.

[468] Newman once notes this in passing- cf. *T.P.*, 38: "(But question- is not all doubt and fear [of natural certainty] excluded in our faith in the laws of nature?)". On Ferreira's reading, Newman could even maintain that divine faith cannot be "resolved" into its human motives, given the distinction between assent and inference.

Firstly, Newman's religious epistemology in the Grammar is obviously opposed to Reformed Epistemology insofar as it is evidentialist. Assents are not based on particular pieces of evidence synchronically, but should originate from acts of inference diachronically, and a believer should maintain that there is evidence for her "reflex" assents. However, in several ways, Newman's project has affinities with the broad principles of Reformed Epistemology. Newman is keen to reject *a priori* constraints on permissible belief-forming procedures which pretend that they themselves are somehow self-evident. In Newman's case, he principally attempts to justify acts of assent which go beyond inference in this way; yet he also anticipates Plantinga in noting that there is no self-evident and internally consistent set of criteria for which beliefs are properly basic. Newman also thereby retains an important role for the divine design of our intellectual capacities in his epistemology. Ultimately, it is God's design of our cognitive faculties which makes the act of assent "natural" and epistemically permissible, together with the fact that they are aimed at truth. Thus Lamont notes that Newman's image of the illative sense resembling a clock which can keep or lose time suggests that his epistemology contains externalist elements.[469] Newman is, though, concerned with our ability to perceive the truth-directed reliability of our cognitive faculties- or at least, our ability to rebut the suggestion that our faculties do not reliably produce true beliefs, which religious diversity might be thought to suggest in the case of religious beliefs. Echoing Alston, however, Newman notes that one's basic belief-forming procedures can at best confirm their own reliability in a circular way, and observes that pleasingly, our religious belief forming faculties do so.[470] Importantly, Newman reaffirms his early contention that belief in God can and should be basic, grounded in the phenomenology of conscience. As with Plantinga's *sensus divinitatis*, basic belief in God can be suppressed by the cognitive consequences of sin. Newman's analysis of the formation of *fides humana* in the Grammar, also allows an important role for the will, although unlike in CRE, the will prevents irrational doubt more than it directly causes belief.

[469] Lamont, "Newman on Faith and Rationality", 82. Cf. *G.A.*, 233.
[470] "I cannot think, reflect, or judge about my being, without starting from the very point which I aim at concluding. My ideas are all assumptions, and I am ever moving in a circle." (*G.A.*, 347).

4.7 Evaluation of Newman's Mature Epistemology

Newman's mature epistemology lays the ground for an innovative analysis of faith which is similar to CRE, yet contains an evidentialist element. Newman himself retains a notion of divine faith similar to my own. Yet since on Ferreira's interpretation his later thought plausibly accounts for all the properties of faith required by Catholic doctrine, it is appropriate to consider briefly the cogency of this model[471] as an alternative to CRE. Firstly, it should be noted that Newman's epistemology will be challenged by evidentialists, who may regard many assents as involving an impermissible bestowal of a greater level of credence in propositions than the evidence warrants. Whereas Newman claims that our natural propensity to thus assent to propositions should count in favour of its permissibility, one might have a stronger intuition that levels of credence should be proportioned to the weight of supporting evidence.

Such worries aside, there are two areas in which (on Ferreira's interpretation) Newman's theory struggles to account for properties of faith suggested by Catholic teaching. Firstly, Newman allows that despite possessing presumptive rational tenacity, apparent natural "certitudes" may be defeated if the believer reasons according to her best epistemic lights. Accordingly, if the rational tenacity of faith were explained in a similar manner, it is not evident that a believer would invariably be blameworthy for abandoning faith, as Vatican I claims. There is, therefore, as Newman seems to allow, room for faith to have a higher degree of rational tenacity than ordinary assents. This degree of rational tenacity would plausibly be possessed by divine faith if, in line with CRE, divine faith is an intellectual habit which- at least, when fully functioning- makes Catholic faith a fundamental doxastic practice, rather than a epistemic practice supported by evidence apprehended by the illative sense. Secondly, Newman attempts to argue that even the young and uneducated can assent to the credibility of Catholic teaching. Even granting the broad cogency of Newman's epistemology in the Grammar, it seems that many contemporary Christians may inculpably lack sufficient evidence to make a firm assent to the Church's credibility through their illative sense. Modern believers are faced with many defeaters for their faith, and the fact that "expert" intellectuals often reject Christianity. Even many

[471] (i.e. Newman's theory according to Ferreira).

Christian apologists might concede that the motives of credibility are less compelling than our evidence for the insularity of Britain, or the other examples Newman gives to illustrate the possibility of certitude in "concrete" matters. Accordingly, on Ferreira's interpretation of Newman's model, many Christians may not be warranted in holding to faith with the "certainty" of assent, which conflicts with the broad Catholic affirmation of the rationality of faith.

5.0 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have compared Newman's analysis of faith to that afforded by Reformed Epistemology and CRE. In many respects, Newman saw past the narrow evidentialism of empiricist philosophy. This is particularly clear with regard to his emphasis on the importance of accepting human reasoning as God has created it, which is not quite in line with the standards of classical foundationalism. This led Newman to believe that the roots of Christian faith lie in basic belief in God made evident to those obedient to the dictates of conscience. Newman's religious epistemology developed in various respects, but this foundation, which remained constant, clearly resembles Plantinga's theory of the *sensus divinitatis*.

With regard to Christian belief, Newman was less willing to abandon the evidentialism of his contemporaries, although as a Catholic he came to believe that divine faith was akin to the fundamental belief-forming practice of "Catholic faith" which forms part of CRE. Newman asserted that faith must be preceded by an assessment of evidence for Christianity, although the manner in which Newman believed this assessment might proceed to certainty would put him at odds with contemporary evidentialists. Newman's inclination to evidentialism was, I suggest, particularly fostered by "prejudices" inculcated by his historical situation. As an Anglo-Catholic weaned on Butler and Locke, Newman was unlikely to follow Calvinist "enthusiasm" in rejecting evidentialism. Moreover, as a Catholic convert, Newman was eager to follow prevailing orthodoxy, which asserted the necessity of an evidence-based judgement of credibility. Perhaps without these particular influences, Newman might have reached a position closer to mine. Yet even given his evidentialism, Newman's thought contains strains very close to CRE.

Conclusion

1.0 Concluding Remarks

Having completed my survey of prominent authors within Catholic tradition and the comparison of their religious epistemologies to CRE, it is now possible to recapitulate my arguments, and to draw some conclusions about the significance of my analysis.

1.1 Summary of the Argument

In my first chapter, I outlined "Counter-Reformed Epistemology" as a development of the work of Plantinga and Alston designed to meet the requirements of a Catholic analysis of faith. In developing CRE, I aimed to meet the twin goals of explaining how modern Catholic belief can be rational even in the fact of apparently hostile epistemic conditions, and of giving an exposition of faith which would address the difficulty of construing a model which renders "divine" faith freely chosen, gracious and perfectly certain/rationally tenacious. Although Catholic philosophers have alleged that Reformed Epistemology fails to account for these properties of faith, I claimed that CRE can account for these properties better than the models of faith and reason proposed by Catholic philosophers as an alternative to Reformed Epistemology. Specifically, I suggested that in paradigmatic instances of divine faith, a believer chooses to make believing in line with God's revelation through the Church her fundamental doxastic practice when forming religious beliefs. Since the Church teaches that her doctrines are to be accepted as perfectly certain (since they are divinely revealed), this means that someone who believes with the habit of divine faith will accept these doctrines with a perfect degree of credence. Moreover, since she has made the practice of Catholic faith fundamental (such that its outputs are not overridden by those of any other doxastic practice), her beliefs will also be perfectly rationally tenacious.

Yet could someone be rational in making Catholic faith a fundamental doxastic practice? Here, the work of Plantinga and Alston helped to show how this could be the case. From an "externalist" perspective, on which (*in fine*) a belief is regarded as having significant positive epistemic status if produced by a mechanism which reliably yields true beliefs, I borrowed the suggestion of Plantinga

that God might graciously infuse a cognitive mechanism into humans causing them to reliably produce basic Christian beliefs when the mechanism functions properly. On CRE, some such mechanism causes the basic belief that God is really revealing Himself through the Church's teaching, or else immediately infuses into the believer the habit of believing in line with the Church's teachings. This means that believers are, in an externalist sense, justified in adopting Catholic faith as a fundamental doxastic practice, since beliefs which are formed in this way are produced by a mechanism designed by God to reliably produce true religious beliefs. Consequently, these beliefs ought to meet "externalist" criteria for the possession of positive epistemic status, such as those outlined by "proper functionalist" accounts of warrant/justification, or "safety" conditions on knowledge.

From an "internalist" perspective, I suggested that basic beliefs formed by one adopting the practice of Catholic faith as fundamental can pass my "No Guessing" requirement for justification. Precisely, if a believer reflects on whether her religious beliefs thus formed are "guesses" she will likely reject such a suggestion. Firstly, in paradigmatic cases, she will have very strong "impulsional evidence" for adopting the practice of Catholic faith as a fundamental doxastic practice: believing in line with God's revelation through the Church will seem as natural and appropriate as forming beliefs on the basis of sense-perception or recollection. On the other hand, even those lacking strong impulsional evidence for adopting the practice of Catholic faith as fundamental may have some reason to believe that their basic engagement in this practice is epistemically appropriate. This is because plausibly, if the Catholic faith is true (as they believe), then so is CRE, on which they are warranted in adopting Catholic faith as a fundamental doxastic practice. Thus, the practice of Catholic faith is self-confirming on CRE, just as Alston suggests that many of our basic doxastic practices (sense perception, memory, etc.) broadly indicate their own reliability.

In my second chapter, I expanded CRE to account for the possibility of those who currently lack explicit divine faith in revelation through the Church nevertheless possessing such faith "implicitly". It was important CRE could be shown to be compatible with this possibility (dubbed by "Anonymous Christianity" by Karl Rahner) because the Second Vatican Council teaches that even those who

inculpably deny the existence of God at an explicit level can be saved. Although Anonymous Christianity is not the only model allowing for the salvation of atheists, there are benefits to claiming that explicit non-believers may already be "implicitly" exercising the virtue of faith, which I took to be tantamount to the claim that they have an intellectual disposition to assent to Church doctrine under certain circumstances. Notably, such an affirmation explains how the epistemic habits formed by non-believers in this life can determine their future salvation. The possession of "implicit" divine faith puts explicit non-believers in an epistemically favourable position to come to explicit faith in Christ when faced with circumstances which will trigger their latent faith. Concretely, I argued that just as those with "explicit" divine faith (in paradigm cases) make Catholic faith their fundamental doxastic practice, so "implicit Christians" make "aesthetically-guided belief formation" their fundamental doxastic practice when forming beliefs on a range of matters, including religious topics. If Christianity is true, the existence of God and more particularly the existence of the loving, Trinitarian God revealed in Christ plausibly underpins the ontology of beauty. In affirming the truth of theories on the basis of their beauty, one therefore "implicitly" affirms the existence of such a God as the precondition of the possibility of their doxastic practice.

In the third to fifth chapters, I attempted to show that CRE has precedent in Catholic theological tradition. This was important for two reasons. Firstly, since the Church teaches that God's revelation in Christ is as a general matter faithfully passed on and clarified by the Church's gradual theological reflection, consonance with tradition is an important *desideratum* for any theological argument. Secondly, there was a lacuna in my development of CRE in the first chapter. One difficulty with Plantinga's religious epistemology is that despite his assertions, he provides little evidence to show that if Christianity is true, basic Christian beliefs would be warranted because they would be produced by the IIHS. Accordingly, it is not clear what epistemic value those who have basic Christian belief which is only backed by weak "impulsional evidence" should accord to their religious beliefs. For all Plantinga tells such Christians, there is a good chance that their beliefs lack warrant even if Christianity is true. It was desirable, therefore, that in advancing CRE as a model of faith which illustrates how believers can take their faith to be rational, I showed that CRE is quite likely to be true

given Catholicism. Since the insights of tradition are taken to have considerable authority within Catholic theology, evidence that prominent authors within the tradition have proposed an analysis of faith similar to CRE should provide further evidence that if Catholicism is true, CRE holds true.

1.2 The Significance of the Traditional Evidence for CRE

My exploration of religious epistemology within the Catholic tradition has, of course, only scratched the surface of the discussion of faith by Western theologians. Whilst I chose to focus on three influential authors from the same broad tradition (Augustine, Aquinas and Newman), with more space it would have been desirable to examine in greater detail later interpreters of these figures, who are themselves part of Catholic tradition. Whilst I cannot support the claim here, I suspect that such work would uncover further evidence for my contention that CRE has theological precedent. For example, the intellectual inheritance of Augustine on the rational grounding of faith was disputed by Abelard and his twelfth-century opponents, and much Baroque Scholastic literature affirmed the possibility of the "judgement of credibility" being based on the *vocatio interior* which Aquinas had asserted ought to lead one to faith. There is room, therefore, for my historical argument to be expanded and strengthened. Equally, I have not directly attempted to show that there is Scriptural support for the truth of CRE. Although the Bible does not present a detailed and technical analysis of the epistemic properties of faith, a more systematic defence of CRE might benefit from an exploration of the phenomenology of faith evinced in Biblical narratives. This might show that the model of faith which I have sketched is at least compatible with the Scriptural description of believers' experiences. In short, the evidence which I have provided gives some reason to think that CRE is a plausible model of faith if Catholicism is true, but my arguments could profitably be expanded.

The results of my historical exposition of Catholic religious epistemology were, moreover, somewhat mixed. I have been able to show that in the writings of all the major figures examined, there are strong resemblances between elements of their thought and CRE. This was particularly evident in the case of Aquinas, who clearly rejected the notion that the judgement of credibility need be based on evidence acceptable to classical foundationalism, which is also a position which Augustine likely adopted in his

later work. For both these thinkers, faith can be grounded in an "interior" divine call to faith, which I have argued might resemble the inclination to believe suffused with "impulsional evidence" which leads the believer to make Catholic faith a fundamental doxastic practice. Further, all of the thinkers surveyed agree that faith in propositions believed on the basis of divine testimony exhibits (at least in paradigmatic cases) the properties of perfect certainty and rational tenacity, and that coming to believe involves the action of the will. These are all important properties of faith for which CRE attempts to account, and its success in accounting for them should likewise raise its plausibility for Catholics.

However, the thinkers surveyed did not come equally close to espousing CRE. Notably, some Catholic theologians discussed above believed that even if the habit of faith is a matter of making the practice of believing in line with the Church's teachings fundamental, some evaluation of evidence acceptable to classical foundationalists ought to have preceded the adoption of this epistemic practice. This was Newman's position, which echoed the Scholastic consensus of his day, and would later be advanced as an interpretation of Aquinas' thought by Neo-Thomists including Garrigou-Lagrange. Others, such as Rousselot, argued that grace enables the believer to perceive the force of evidence as acute enough to render her belief perfectly certain and rationally tenacious. Rousselot's view therefore approaches the view which I described in the first chapter as the "Insight Model". Further, although I have argued that Augustine and Aquinas allow for the possibility of a "basic" judgement that one ought to adopt the doxastic practice of Catholic faith as basic (or fundamental), with Aquinas even arguing that this is a commendable way to come to faith, both authors may allow the possibility that some believers make at least a preliminary "judgement of credibility" which is grounded in the evidence of miracles, signs etc. which are perceptible to natural reason, and ought to be acceptable forms of evidence on classical foundationalism. This seems to be a concession to classical "evidentialism" that even if the faith of believers need not be grounded in our preceded by the evaluation of evidence, such an evaluation may be what renders some believers rational in their faith.

In light of this, one might wonder whether CRE should be taken to have significantly more support from tradition than more "evidentialist" accounts of faith. Overall, I suggest that my examination of historical Catholic epistemology lends some support to the idea that CRE is the model of faith and

reason which, of those discussed in the first chapter, is best supported by Catholic tradition. In this respect, it is important to note that firstly, CRE comes closest of the models discussed to representing the thought of Aquinas, who is perhaps the most influential Catholic theologian and philosopher in the tradition. Moreover, it is noticeable that many of the theologians who argued for more analyses of faith more acceptable to classical foundationalism do so whilst claiming to be engaging in exegesis of St. Thomas. My work has built upon scholarly consensus in rejecting readings of Aquinas sympathetic to "classical foundationalist" constraints of justification. If my interpretation of Aquinas is correct, therefore, Catholics should plausibly give less weight to elements in the tradition which falsely present their own positions as interpretations of Aquinas.

Perhaps other than Thomas, Augustine is the most influential Catholic theologian whose views I have expounded. Although some of Augustine's writings make it appear that it is evidence that which renders faith rational, it is notable that as Augustine developed his theory of grace, he more clearly suggested the possibility of belief without external evidence. Accordingly, whilst he does not rule out the possibility of faith being rationally grounded in publicly available evidence, the fact that he seems not to have required that faith was so grounded at least gives support to the contention that CRE presents a plausible picture of how God lead some people to faith. Further, whilst I have lacked the space to discuss the later reception of Augustine's thought on faith and reason, I believe that an evaluation of the debates surrounding Abelard's work would show that many twelfth-century thinkers heavily influenced by Augustine strongly rejected evidentialist readings of his work. Whilst such interpretations of Augustine should not be taken as normative for exegesis, they lend support to my contention that the broad sweep of Augustine's thought rejects evidentialism.

Passages which lead to the impression that Augustine and Aquinas hold to some form of evidentialism are often taken from their apologetic works. It is therefore important to note that it is generally easy for a theologian to sound like an evidentialist, when she is merely offering argument for the credibility of the faith in an apologetic context. Apologetic concerns also explain why later authors are more explicitly "evidentialist" than Augustine or Aquinas. Many of the nineteenth century debates about faith within Catholicism, which led to the Neo-Scholastic views espoused by Garrigou-Lagrange and

Gardeil, were born of apologetic concerns to emphasise that faith can be shown to be rational by natural reason. Those rejecting the faith should not merely be able to appeal to their lack of an "inner calling" to justify their non-belief. Like Reformed Epistemology, however, CRE does not deny the tradition's insistence that Catholic faith possesses strong evidence of its credibility which is perceptible even through the *lumen natural*e. Rather, it suggests that whilst such evidence is forthcoming and may lead converts to the Church, it is only by making the doxastic practice of Catholic faith fundamental that believers can be fully epistemically secure in their faith. Accordingly, CRE is able to acknowledge a driving aim of some evidentialist views expressed with Catholic tradition. It is more difficult to see how evidentialist accounts of faith and reason given by Catholic philosophers could likewise incorporate as insightful the elements of Catholic tradition which clearly oppose the form of evidentialism espoused by classical foundationalists.

To draw this overview to a close, then, it is clear that CRE cannot claim unqualified support in Catholic tradition. However, I believe that since CRE or something similar is envisaged as an explanation of how the faith of some believers is rational by important authors within Catholic tradition, those Catholics who find themselves drawn to making belief in line with the Church's teaching a fundamental doxastic practice should feel quite confident that God is drawing them to believe in a rationally acceptable manner.

Bibliography

Doctrinal Reference Works:

CCC: Catechism of the Catholic Church: Revised Edition. London: Burns & Oates, 2002. (References to the Catechism are given both to the paragraph and page number).

Denzinger: Denzinger, Henricus and Adolfus Schönmetzer ed. *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum De Rebus Fidei et Morum* XXXIII edn. Barcelona: Herder, 1965. (References to Denzinger are given to the paragraph number).

Vatican II : Flannery, Austin ed. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents: Revised Edition*. Leominster: Fowler-Wright, 1998.

Biblical Texts are quoted from the NRSV: *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal/Deutrocanonical Books: New Revised Standard Version: Anglicized Edition* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995).

Historical Authors (Primary Texts):

Augustine of Hippo:

Latin texts are taken from:

J.P. Migne ed. *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina*. (221 Vols.) Paris: 1844-65.

References are abbreviated as PL, followed by the volume and column number.

Unless otherwise noted, English translations are taken from: Boniface Ramsey et al. ed. *The Works of Saint Augustine: A New Translation for the 21st Century*. (50 Vols.) Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990-.

English translations from *De Magistro* and *De Libero Arbitrio* are from: Robert P. Russell ed. *Saint Augustine: The Teacher, The Free Choice of the Will, Grace and Free Will* (Fathers of the Church, 59). Washington DC: CUA Press, 1968.

The following abbreviations, as found in Fitzgerald ed. *Augustine Through the Ages* are used to refer to Augustine's writings:

C. Acad.	*Contra Academicos*
Quant.	*De Animae Quantitate*
Civ. Dei.	*De Civitate Dei*
Conf.	*Confessiones*
Corrept.	*De Correptione et Gratia*
Div. Qu.	*De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus*
En. Ps.	*Ennarationes in Psalmos*
Ep.	*Epistulae*
Ep. Jo.	*In Epistulam Joannis ad Parthos*
C. Ep. Pel.	*Contra Duas Epistulas Joannis ad Parthos*

C. Ep. Man.	*Contra Epistulam Manichei Quam Vocant Fundamenti*
C. Faust.	*Contra Faustum Manicheum*
F. Invis.	*De Fide in Rerum Invisibilium*
Gn Litt.	*De Genesi ad Litteram*
Gr. Et. Lib. Arb.	*De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*
Gr. Et. Pecc. Or.	*De Gratia Christi et Peccato Originale*
Jo.Ev. Tract.	*In Johannis Evangelium Tractatus*
Lib. Arb.	*De Libero Arbitrio*
Mag.	*De Magistro*
Nat. et Grat.	*De Natura et Gratia*
Ord.	*De Ordine*
Pecc.Mer.	*De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione et De Baptismo Parvulorum*
Persev.	*De Dono Persevante*
Praed. Sanct.	*De Praedestione Sanctorum*
Retr.	*Retractiones*
S.	*Sermones*
Spir. Et Litt.	*De Spiritu et Littera*
Trin.	*De Trinitate*
Sol.	*Soliloquia*
Util. Cred.	*De Utilitate Credendi*
Vera Rel.	*De Vera Religione*

Peter Abelard:

Sic et Non Sic is quoted from Boyer, Blanche and Richard McKeon ed. *Peter Abailard: Sic et Non: A Critical Edition*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1977.

Thomas Aquinas:

Latin texts are taken from the Leonine Edition:

Sancti Thomae Aquinatis doctoris angelici (de Aquino) opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII. (Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1882-.

Unless otherwise noted, English translation are quoted from the following translations:

Summa Theologiae: English Dominican Province trans. *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas* 2nd rev. ed. (22 vols.) London: Burns, Oates & Washborne, 1922-1935.

Summa Contra Gentiles: St. Thomas Aquinas. Anton C. Pegis, James Anderson, Vernon Bourke and Charles O'Neil trans. *Summa Contra Gentiles, Translated with an Introduction and Notes*. (5 vols.) Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975.

De Potentia: English Dominican Province trans. *Quaestiones Disputatae de Potentia Dei*/*On the Power of God* (3 vols.) London: Burns, Oates & Washborne, 1932-4.

De Veritate: Robert Mulligan, James McGlynn and R.W. Schmidt trans. *Truth*. (3 vols.) Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.

In Jn: Fabian Larcher trans. *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. (3 vols.) Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine: 2013.

The following abbreviations are used for Aquinas' works:

Boe.	*Expositio Super Librum Boethii De Trinitate*
De Pot.	*De Potentia*
DV	*Quaestiones Disputate De Veritate*
In I. Cor.	*Super I ad Corinthianos*
In Jn	*Super Evangelium Johannis*
In Matt	*Super Evangelium Matthaei*
In Rom	*Super ad Romanos*
In Symb. Apost.	*Expositio in Symbolum Apostolorum*
Qdl.	*Quaestiones Quodlibetales*
SCG	*Summa Contra Gentiles*
ST	*Summa Theologiae*
SSS	*Scriptum Super Libros Sententiarum*

John Henry Newman:

Newman's works are generally cited from the uniform edition of 1868-81 (36 vols.) published by Longmans, Green & Co.

Newman's *Apologia* is cited from Ian Ker ed. *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. (Bungay, Suffolk: Penguin, 1994).

Newman's correspondence with William Froude is cited from Gordon Harper ed. *Cardinal Newman and William Froude, F.R.S.: A Correspondence*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1933.

The following abbreviations, found in Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. are used for Newman's writings:

Apologia	*Apologia pro Vita Sua*
A.W.	Henry Tristam ed. *Autobiographical Writings*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1956.
Dev.	*An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*

G.A.	*An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*
Jfc.	*Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*
L.G.	*Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert*
L.D.	Dessain. Charles Stephen ed. *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*
Mix.	*Discourses addressed to Mixed Congregations*
Mir.	*Two Essays on Biblical and Ecclesiastical Miracles*
Theses	*Theses De Fide*, from Tristam, Henry. "Cardinal Newman's Theses de Fide and his proposed Introduction to the French translation of the University Sermons." *Gregorianum* XVIII (1937): 219-60.
T.P.	Derek Holmes ed. *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.
U.S.	*Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford* (3rd ed.)
V.M.	*Via Media*

Giovanni Perrone:

Giovanni Perrone, *Praelectiones Theologicae* (2 vols.) Paris: J.P. Migne, 1842.

Nietzsche:

Cited from Alan D. Schrift and Duncan Large ed. *The Complete Works of Fredrich Nietzsche.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 2013.

Secondary Authors/Contemporary Texts

Alston, William. "Religious Experience and Belief." *Nous* 16 No.1 (1982): 3-12.

Alston, William. *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991.

Alston, William. "On Knowing That We Know": the Application to Religious Knowledge." 15-39. In C. Stephen Evans and Merold Westphal ed. *Christian Perspectives on Religious Knowledge*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Alston, William. "Belief, Acceptance and Religious Faith." In Jeff Jordan and Daniel Howard-Snyder ed. *Faith Freedom and Rationality*, 3-27. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996.

Alston, William, *Beyond " Justification": Dimensions of Epistemic Evaluation*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005.

Aquino, Frederick. *Communities of Informed Judgement: Newman's Illative Sense and Accounts of Rationality*. Washington DC: CUA Press, 2000.

Aubert, Roger. *Le Problème de l'Acte de Foi: Données Traditionelles et Résultats de Controverses Récentes*, 2nd ed. Louvain: Pub. de Univ. Louvain, 1950.

Audi, Robert. "Dispositional Beliefs and Dispositions to Believe." *Nous*, 28 No.4 (1995): 419-434.

Baker, Alan. "Simplicity." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/simplicity/>.

Baker, Deane-Peter. *Tayloring Reformed Epistemology: Charles Taylor, Alvin Plantinga and the De Jure Challenge to Religious Belief*. London: SCM, 2007.

Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Volume I: Seeing the Form*. Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1982.

Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *The Moment of Christian Witness*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994.

Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *Love Alone is Credible*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004.

Beilby, James. *Epistemology as Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

Bergmann, Michael. *Justification Without Awareness*. New York: Oxford UP, 2006.

Beyer, Gerald. "Karl Rahner on the Radical Unity of the Love of God and Neighbour." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 68 (2003): 251-80.

Boekraad, Adrian. *The Argument from Conscience to the Existence of God according to J. H. Newman*. Louvain: Ed. Nauwelaerts, 1961.

Bratman, Michael. "Practical Reasoning and Acceptance in a Context." *Mind* 101 (1992): 1-15.

Brent, Alan. "The Hermesian Dimension to the Newman-Perrone Dialogue." *Ephemerides Theologicae Louvanienses*, 61 No.1 (1985): 73-99.

Brent, James. "The Epistemic Status of Belief in Thomas Aquinas." PhD diss., Saint Louis University, 2008.

Bullivant, Stephen. *The Salvation of Atheists and Catholic Dogmatic Theology*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013.

Burch Brown, Frank. *Good Taste, Bad Taste and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

Burke, Patrick. *Reinterpreting Rahner: A Critical Study of his Major Themes*. New York: Fordham UP, 2002.

Burnaby, John. *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938.

Camelot, Thomas. "Credere Deum, Credere Deo, Credere in Deum", *Recherches de Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques* 30 (1941): 465-71.

Cary, Philip. *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul*. New York: OUP, 2008.

Chappell, Timothy. *Aristotle and Augustine on Freedom: Two Theories of Freedom, Voluntary Action and Akrasia.* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995.

Church, Ian. "50 Years of Gettier: A New Direction in Religious Epistemology?" *Journal of Analytic Theology* 3 (2015): 147-171.

Church, Jennifer. “Taking it to Heart: What Choice do We Have?” *The Monist* 85 No.3 (2002): 361-80.

Clark, Mary. “Augustine on Conscience.” In Elizabeth Livingstone ed. *Studia Patristica* XXXII, 63-7. Leuven: Peeters, 1995.

Conee, Earl and Richard Feldman. *Evidentialism: Essays in Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.

Connolly, John. “Newman on Human Faith and Divine Faith: Clarifying some Ambiguities.” *Horizons* 23 No.2 (1996): 261-80.

Conway, Daniel. “Genealogy and Critical Method.” In Richard Schacht ed. *Nietzsche, Genealogy and Morality: Essays on Nietzsche’s Genealogy of Morals*. Los Angeles: California UP, 1994.

Conway, Eamonn. *The Anonymous Christian- A Relativised Christianity?* Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993.

Craig, William and John Moreland. *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 2003.

Crisp, Oliver. “On Analytic Theology.” In Oliver Crisp and Michael Rea (ed.) *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, 33-53. Oxford: OUP, 2009.

Cross, Richard. “Testimony, Error and Reasonable Belief in Medieval Religious Epistemology.” (unpublished).

Cushman, Ronald. “Faith and Reason” in Roy Battenhouse ed. *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*, 287-314. New York: OUP, 1955.

Davies, Brian. *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

Davies, Brian. *Thomas Aquinas’ Summa Contra Gentiles: A Guide and Commentary*. New York: Oxford UP, 2016.

D’Costa, Gavin. “Karl Rahner’s Anonymous Christian: A Reappraisal.” *Modern Theology* 1 No.2 (1985): 131-148.

D’Costa, Gavin. *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions*. Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

De Lubac, Henri. *The Mystery of the Supernatural*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967.

De Lubac, Henri. *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995.

DeRose, Keith. “Direct Warrant Realism.” In Andrew Dole and Andrew Chignell, ed. *God and the Ethics of Belief: New Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*, 150-72. New York: Cambridge UP, 2005.

DiNoia, Augustine. “Implicit Faith, General Revelation and the State of Non-Christians.” *The Thomist*, 47 No.2 (1983): 209-241.

Dougherty, Trent. “Faith, Trust and Testimony: An Evidentialist Account.” In Laura Callahan and O’Connor ed. *Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue*, 97-123. New York: Oxford UP, 2014.

Dougherty, Trent and Chris Tweedt. “Religious Epistemology.” *Philosophy Compass* 10 No.8 (2015): 547-559.

Dulles, Avery. *The Assurance of Things Hoped For: A Theology of Christian Faith*. New York: Oxford UP, 1994.

Dulles, Avery. “From Images to Truth: Newman on Revelation and Faith.” *Theological Studies* 51 No.2 (1990): 252-267.

Dutton, James. *Augustine and Academic Scepticism*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2016.

Farrer, Austin. “Faith and Evidence.” in Susan Howatch ed. *Saving Belief*, 1-24. London: Mowbray, 1994.

Feingold, Lawrence. *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas and his Interpreters*. Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010.

Ferreira, Jaimie. *Doubt and Religious Commitment: The Role of Will in Newman’s Thought*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.

Ferreira, Jaimie. “Newman and the ‘Ethics of Belief’.” *Religious Studies* 19 No.3 (1983): 361-71.

Fey, William. *Faith and Doubt: The Unfolding of Newman’s Thought on Certainty*. Shepherdstown WV: Patmos Press, 1976.

Fields, Stephen. “The Beauty of the Ugly: Balthasar, the Crucifixion, Analogy and God.” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9 No.2 (2007): 172-183.

Flanagan, Philip. *Newman, Faith and the Believer*. London: Sands, 1946.

Furlong, Peter. “Indeterminism and Freedom of Decision in Aquinas.” PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2013.

Garcia, Laura. “Natural Theology and the Reformed Objection.” In Steven Evans and Merold Westphal ed. *Christian Perspectives on Religious Knowledge*, 112-133. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Gardeil, Ambrose. “Crédibilité.” In Bernard Loth and Jean Michel Alfred Vacant, ed. *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, Commencé sous la direction de A. Vacant.* (15 vols), Vol.XXIV-V (1907-8), 2201-2310 Paris: 1903-1950.

Gardner, Sebastian. “Nietzsche’s Philosophical Aestheticism.” In Ken Gemes and John Richardson ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*. New York: OUP, 2013.

Garrigou-Lagrange, Reginald. *The Theological Virtues: Volume One: On Faith. A Commentary on St.Thomas’ Theological Summa IaIIae qq.62,65,68: IIaIIae qq.1-16*. St Louis: Herder, 1965.

George, Marie. “’Trust Me’ ‘Why should I?’ Aquinas on Faith and Reason.” In *The Ever-Illuminating Wisdom of St. Thomas Aquinas: Papers Presented at a Conference of the Wethersfield Institute, New York City, October 14th, 1994*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999.

Gilson, Etienne. *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*. London: V. Gollancz, 1961.

Gilson, Etienne. *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*. London: V. Gollancz, 1957.

Gioia, Luigi. *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.

Greco, John. "Catholics vs Calvinists on Religious Knowledge." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 No.1 (1997): 13-34.

Haack, Susan. "'The Ethics of Belief' Reconsidered." In Matthias Steup ed. *Knowledge, Truth and Duty: Essays in Epistemic Justification, Responsibility, and Virtue*, 21-33. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Hallett, Garth. *A Middle Way to God*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

Harrison, Carol. *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity*. New York: Oxford UP, 2006.

Hawthorne, John. "Aquinas on Faith and Knowledge: Response to Robert Pasnau." In John Marenbon ed. *Continuity and Innovation in Medieval and Modern Philosophy: Knowledge, Mind and Language*, 119-133. Oxford: Oxford UP/British Academy, 2013.

Hick, John. *Faith and Knowledge*. London: Macmillan, 1967.

Hoitenga, Dewey. *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga: An Introduction to Reformed Epistemology*. Albany: State University of NY Press 1991.

Hughes, Gerard. "Conscience." In Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009.

James, William. The Will to Believe." In Gerald McCarthy ed. *The Ethics of Belief Debate*, 55-71. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.

Jenkins, John. *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

Kenney, John. "Faith and Reason." In David Meconi and Eleonore Stump ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine: Second Edition*, 275-291. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2014.

Kenny, Anthony. *The Unknown God: Agnostic Essays*. London: Continuum, 2004.

Ker, Ian and Alan Hill (ed.) *Newman After a Hundred Years*. New York: OUP, 1990.

Ker, Ian. *The Achievement of John Henry Newman*. London: Collins, 1990.

Ker, Ian. *Newman on Vatican II*. Oxford: OUP, 2014.

Ker, Ian. "Editor's Introduction" in John Henry Newman, Ker (ed.) *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. Oxford: Oxford UP 2016.

Kerr, Fergus. "'In an Isolated and, Philosophically, Uninfluential Way': Newman and Oxford Philosophy." In Terrence Merrigan and Ian Ker (ed.) *Newman and the Word*, 155-179. Louvain: Peeters, 2000.

Kerr, Fergus. "Knowing God by Reason Alone: What Vatican I Never Said." *New Blackfriars* 91 (2010): 215-228.

Kilby, Karen. *Karl Rahner, Theology and Philosophy*. London: Taylor and Francis, 2004.

Kilby, Karen. *Balthasar: A Very Critical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

King, Peter and Nathan Ballantyne. "Augustine on Testimony", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 29 No.2 (2009): 195-214.

Kirwan, Christopher. *Augustine*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Konyndyk, Kenneth. Aquinas on Faith and Science." *Faith and Philosophy* 12 No.1 (1995): 3-21.

Kretzmann, Norman. "Faith Seeks, Understanding Finds: Augustine's Charter for Christian Philosophy." In Thomas Flint ed. *Christian Philosophy,* 1-36. Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1990.

Kretzmann, Norman. "Evidence Against Anti-Evidentialism." In Kelly James Clark ed. *Our Knowledge of God: Essays on Natural and Philosophical Theology*, 17-38. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992.

Kvanvig, Jonathan. *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology: Essays in Honour of Plantinga's Theory of Knowledge*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996.

Kvanvig, Jonathan. *Faith and Humility*. Oxford: OUP, 2018.

Lamont, John. "Newman on Faith and Rationality." *Internal Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 40 No.2 (1996): 63-84.

Lamont, John. *Divine Faith*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

Lamont, John. "A Conception of Faith in the Greek Fathers." In Oliver Crisp and Michael Rea ed. *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, 87-116. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009.

Leahy, Brendan. "Theological Aesthetics." In Bede McGregor and Thomas Norris ed. *The Beauty of Christ: A Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* 23-55. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994.

Lehrer, Keith. "Belief, Acceptance and Cognition" in Herman Parett ed. *On Believing*, 172-183. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1983.

Long, Steven. *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace*. New York: Fordham UP, 2010.

MacDonald, Paul. "A Realist Epistemology of Religious Faith." *Religious Studies* 41 No.4 (2005): 373-393.

MacDonald, Paul. "The Epistemology of Faith in Augustine and Aquinas." In Phillip Cary (ed.) *Augustine and Philosophy*, 167-196. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010.

MacDonald, Scott. "Christian Faith." In Eleonore Stump ed. *Reasoned Faith*: *Essays in Philosophical Theology in Honour of Norman Kretzmann*, 42-69. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993.

MacDonald, Scott. "Augustine." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Epistemology of Theology*, 254-368. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017.

Mackie, John. *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and Against the Existence of God*. Oxford: OUP, 1982.

Marshall, Bruce. “Quod Scit Una Vetulla: Aquinas on the Nature of Theology.” In Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (ed.) *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, 1-35. Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 2005.

Mascord, Keith. *Alvin Plantinga and Christian Apologetics*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006.

Matthews, Gareth. “Knowledge and Illumination.” In Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 171-185. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.

Matthews, Gareth. *Augustine*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

McGrew, Timothy. “Has Plantinga Refuted the Historical Argument?” *Philosophia Christi* No.6 (2006): 7-26.

McGrew, Timothy and Lydia McGrew. “On the Historical Argument: A Rejoinder to Plantinga.” *Philosophia Christi* No.8 (2008): 23-38.

McPartlan, Paul. “Who is the Church? Zizioulas and von Balthasar on the Church’s Identity.” *Ecclesiology* No. 4 (2008): 271-88.

Miller, Barry. *A Most Unlikely God: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature of God*. London and Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1996.

Moon, Andrew. “Recent Work in Reformed Epistemology.” *Philosophical Compass* No.11 (2016): 879-891.

Mori, Elios. *Il Motivo Della Fede da Gaetano a Suarez: con Appendice di fonti Manoscritte*. Rome: PU Gregorianum, 1953.

Nash, Ronald. *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine’s Theory of Knowledge*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1969.

Norris, Thomas. “Newman’s Approach to the Act of Faith in the Light of the Catholic Dogmatic Tradition.” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 69 (2004): 239-261.

Nichols, Aidan. *The Word Has Been Abroad: A Guide through Balthasar’s Aesthetics*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1998.

Nichols, Aidan. “Rahner and Balthasar: The Anonymous Christianity Debate Revisited”, in *Beyond the Blue Glass, Catholic Essays on Faith and Culture*, 107-128. London: The Saint Austin Press, 2002.

Nichols, Aidan. *From Hermes to Benedict XVI: Faith and Reason in Modern Catholic Thought*. Leominster: Gracewing, 2009.

Niedebacher, Bruno. “The Relation of Reason to Faith.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 337-345. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012.

Oakes, Edward. *Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans-Urs von Balthasar*. New York: Continuum, 1994.

O’Collins, Gerald. *Saint Augustine on the Resurrection of Christ: Teaching, Rhetoric and Reception*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017.

O'Daly, Gerald. *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*. London: Duckworth, 1987.

O'Regan, Cyril. "John Henry Newman." In William Abraham and Frederick Aquino ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the Epistemology of Theology,* 510-522. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017.

Pailin, David. *The Way to Faith: An Examination of Newman's "Grammar of Assent" as a Response to the Search for Certainty in Faith*. London: Epworth, 1969.

Pasquini, John. *Atheism and Salvation: Atheism from the Perspective of Anonymous Christianity in the Thought of Revolutionary Mystic and Theologian Karl Rahner*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000.

Phillips, D.Z. "Antecedent Presumption, Faith and Logic." In Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan (ed.) *Newman and Faith*, 1-24. Louvain: Peeters 2014.

Penelhulm, Terrence. "The Analysis of Faith in St. Thomas Aquinas", *Religious Studies* 13 No.2 (1977): 133-154.

Pickavé, Martin. "Human Knowledge." *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 311-323. Oxford: OUP, 2012.

Plantinga, Alvin. *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1967.

Plantinga, Alvin. "Augustinian Christian Philosophy." *The Monist,* 75 No.3 (1992): 291-320.

Plantinga, Alvin. *Warrant: The Current Debate.* New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

Plantinga, Alvin. *Warrant and Proper Function*. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

Plantinga, Alvin. *Warranted Christian Belief*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

Plantinga, Alvin. "Reply [to Sudduth, Wysktra and Zagzebski]." *Philosophical Books* 43 No.2 (2002): 124-35.

Plantinga, Alvin and Nicholas Wolterstorff, ed. *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1983.

Plasger, Georg. "Does Calvin Teach a sensus divinitatis? Reflections on Alvin Plantinga's Interpretation of Calvin." In Dieter Schönecker ed. *Plantinga's "Warranted Christian Belief": Critical Essays with a Reply by Alvin Plantinga*, 169-89. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.

Pojman, Louis. *Religious Belief and the Will*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

Portalié, Eugène. *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*. London: Burns & Oates, 1960.

Price, H.H. (Henry Haberly). *Belief: The Gifford Lectures Delivered at the University of Aberdeen in 1960*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1969.

Reed, Baron. "Certainty." In Edward N. Zalta ed. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition). URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/certainty/>.

Rahner, Karl. *Theological Investigations* (23 vols.) London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961-1992.

Rahner, Karl. *Spirit in the World*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1968.

Rahner, Karl. *Hearers of the Word*. London: Sheed & Ward, 1969.

Rahner, Karl. "Experiences of a Catholic Theologian." *Theological Studies* 61 No.1 (2000): 3-15.

Rahner, Karl. *The Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978.

Rahner, Karl. *Love of Jesus and Love of Neighbour*. Slough: St. Paul Publications, 1983.

Ratzinger, Joseph. *Introduction to Christianity*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004.

Reno, Russell R. *The Ordinary Transformed: Karl Rahner and the Christian Vision of Transcendence*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Riches, John. "Balthasar and the Analysis of Faith." In John Riches ed. *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 35-59. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986.

Rist, John. "Faith and Reason." In Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 26-39. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.

Ross, James. "Aquinas on Belief and Knowledge." In William Frank and Gerard Etzkorn ed., *Essays Honoring Alan B. Wolter*, 245-69. New York: Franciscan Institute, 1985.

Ross, James. "Believing for Profit." In Gerald McCarthy ed. *The Ethics of Belief Debate*, 221-235. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.

Ross, James. "Cognitive Finality." In *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*, 226-255. Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1993.

Rousselot, Pierre. James Donceel, trans. *The Eyes of Faith*. New York: Fordham UP, 1990.

Rousselot, Pierre. *Essays on Love and Knowledge*. Milwaukee: Marquette UP, 2007.

Russman, Thomas. "Reformed Epistemology." In Leonard Kennedy ed. *Thomistic Papers IV*, 185-207. Houston: University of St. Thomas, 1988.

Russman, Thomas. "A Faith of True Proportions: A Reply to Sullivan." In Thomas Russman ed. *Thomistic Papers V*, 81-90. Houston: Centre for Thomistic Studies, 1990.

Schumacher, Lydia. *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Shanley, Brian. *The Thomist Tradition*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2002.

Shea, Michael C. "From Implicit and Explicit Reason to Inference and Assent: The Significance of John Henry Newman's Seminary Studies in Rome." *Journal of Theological Studies* 67 No.1 (2016): 143-171.

Sherry, Patrick. "John Henry Newman and William Froude, F.R.S." *Heythrop Journal* 52 No.3 (2010): 399-409.

Sherwin, Michael. *By Knowledge and Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Washington DC: CUA Press, 2005.

Sillem, Edward. *The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman*. London: Nauwelaerts, 1970.

Sosa, Ernest. "Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epistemology." *Nous* 17 No.1 (1993): 51-65.

Sosa, Ernest. "Reflective Knowledge in the Best Circles", in Matthias Steup ed. *Knowledge, Truth and Duty: Essays in Epistemic Justification, Responsibility, and Virtue*, 187-201. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Steeves, Nicolas. "Newman's Explicit Influence on Rousselot: Apparent Contrasts?" *Gregorianum* 96 No.4 (2015): 733-47.

Stump, Eleonore. *Aquinas*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Stump, Eleonore. "Beauty as a Road to God", *Sacred Music* 143 No.4 (2007): 13-26.

Stump, Eleonore. *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*. New York, Oxford UP 2010.

Stump Eleonore. "Faith, Wisdom and the Transmission of Knowledge through Testimony." In Timothy O'Connor and Laura Frances Callahan, *Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue*, 204-230. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014.

Sullivan, Francis. *Salvation Outside the Church: Tracing the History of the Catholic Response*. London: Chapman, 1992.

Sullivan, Thomas. "Adequate Evidence for Religious Assent." In Leonard Kennedy ed. *Thomistic Papers IV*, 71-93. Houston: University of St. Thomas, 1988.

Sullivan, Thomas. ""A Reply to Russman. " In Thomas Russman ed. *Thomistic Papers V*, 191-5. Houston: Centre for Thomistic Studies, 1990.

Sullivan, Thomas. "Resolute Belief and the Problem of Objectivity." In Zagzebski, Linda. *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*, 110-139. Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1993.

Swinburne, Richard. *Epistemic Justification*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Swinburne, Richard. *Faith and Reason* (Second Edition). Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

Taliaferro, Charles and Jil Evans. *The Image in Mind: Theism, Naturalism and the Imagination*. New York: Continuum, 2011.

TeSelle, Eugene. *Augustine the Theologian*. London: Burns and Oates, 1970.

TeSelle, Eugene. "Faith." In Alan Fitzgerald ed. *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, 347-50. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Tooley, Michael. "Michael Huemer and the Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism." In Christ Tucker ed. *Seemings and Justification: New Essays on Dogmatism and Phenomenal Conservatism*, 306-327. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013.

Tristam, Henry. “Cardinal Newman’s Theses de Fide and his proposed Introduction to the French translation of the University Sermons.” *Gregorianum* XVIII (1937): 219-60.

Tucker, Chris. “Phenomenal Conservatism and Evidentialism in Religious Epistemology.” In Raymond VanArragon and Kelly James Clark ed. *Evidence and Religious Belief*, 52-73. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011.

Tucker, Chris ed. *Seemings and Justification: New Essays on Dogmatism and Phenomenal Conservatism*, 1-27. New York: Oxford UP, 2013.

Vass, George. *A Theologian in Search of a Philosophy: Understanding Karl Rahner, Vol. I*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1985.

Vass, George. *The Mystery of Man and the Foundations of a Theological System: Understanding Karl Rahner, Vol. II*. London: Sheed & Ward, 1985.

Vallicella, William. *A Paradigm Theory of Existence: Onto-Theology Vindicated*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002.

Veto, Etienne. “Rousselot and Thomas Aquinas: The Eyes of Faith as a Model of “Suntheologein”.” *Gregorianum* 96 No4 (2015): 709-32.

Wainwright, William. *Reason and the Heart: A Prolegomenon to a Critique of Passional Reason*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995.

Walsh, Dorothy. “Occam’s Razor: A Principle of Intellectual Elegance.” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16 No.3 (1979): 241-44.

Ward, Wilfrid. *The Life of John Henry, Cardinal Newman: Based on his Private Journals and Correspondence* (2 vols.) Farnborough: Gregg International, 1970.

Williams, Bernard. “Deciding to believe.” In Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self*, 136-151. Cambridge: CUP 1973.

Williams, Ieuan. “Faith and Scepticism: Newman and the Naturalist Tradition.” *Philosophical Investigations* 15 (1992): 51-66.

Williams, Thomas. “Human Freedom and Agency.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 199-207. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012.

Williamson, Timothy. *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. “The Migration of Theistic Arguments.” In Robert Audi and William Wainwright ed., *Rationality, Religious Belief and Moral Commitment: New Essays on the Philosophy of Religion*, 38-81. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986.

Wolf, José de. *La Justification de le Foi chez Saint Thomas d’Aquin et le Père Rousselot*. Brussels: Edition Universelle, 1946.

Wood, William Jay. “Faith’s Intellectual Rewards.” In Timothy O’Connor and Laura Frances Callahan, ed. *Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue*, 29-48. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014.

Wood, William. “Trajectories, Traditions and Tools in Analytic Theology.” *Journal of Analytic Theology* 4 (2016): 254-266.

Wynn, Mark. “The Relationship of Religion and Ethics: A Comparison of Newman and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion.” *Heythrop Journal* 46 No.4 (2005): 435-449.

Wynn, Mark. “Religious Faith.” In Graham Oppy ed. *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Christian Philosophy of Religion*, 167-179. London: Routledge, 2015.

Zagzebski, Linda ed. *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1993.

Zagzebski, Linda. “Religious Knowledge and the Virtues of the Mind.” In Linda Zagzebski *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*, 199-123. Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1993.

Zagzebski, Linda. “The Inescapability of Gettier Problems.” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (1994): 65-73.