

The Fall of Satan, Rational Psychology, and the Division of Consciousness


A Girardian Thought Experiment

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ABSTRACT This paper proposes a revision of Girard's interpretation of Satan, along traditional theological lines. Appreciating the essential correctness of the Girardian characterization of *mimēsis*, it is an argument, *contra* Girard, that (1) Satan cannot be reduced to a mimetic process but is a hypostatic spiritual reality and, following from this, that (2) the origins of mimetic rivalry go back before the emergence of humankind and provide a model for human rivalry. Employing concepts drawn from Husserlian phenomenological psychology, Thomist theology, and psychoanalysis, it hypothesizes Satan's psychological state, prior to his fall, as metastable anxiety and trauma and his state, afterwards, as a narcissistic, malicious, self-induced pathology in order to explain Satan's impossible rivalry with God, a rivalry that precedes hominization and has always endangered human existence.

KEYWORDS Girardian theory; impatience; intentionality; rational psychology; Satan's fall

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In this paper I will argue that the roots of mimetic rivalry antedate the fall of the primordial parents. However, in keeping with classic Roman Catholic Theology, I will propose an alternative to the allegorizing interpretation of Girard in *I Saw Satan Fall*, one that takes seriously the possibility that the fall of Satan is a narrative about a really existing spiritual being. In this connection, it is my purpose to show that traditional accounts of Satan's evil choice—the choice of an incomparably powerful and brilliant creature (and its consequences)—can be made more intelligible on the basis of Girardian mimetic theory, the Husserlian understanding of intentionality, and some elements drawn from psychoanalytic theory.

1. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC *MAGISTERIUM* AND DEMONOLOGY

On July 10, 1975, the *L'Osservatore Romano* published a brief report, commissioned by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It recommended itself “as a sure foundation for the reaffirmation of the teaching of the *Magisterium* on the theme: Christian Faith and Demonology.”¹ Warning against superstitious obsession of demonological themes in Catholic preaching but also against the error that Christ's redemption has already achieved all its effects, so that spiritual combat against these forces has become no longer necessary, it rejected, in turn, view about demons that: (1) deny they exist, (2) deny their existence *is certain*, (3) deny the Gospels and Christian tradition teach their existence as central to the Gospels, (4) deny that, even if the early tradition teaches the reality of these beings, they are relevant for our times, or (5) assert “the names of Satan and of the devil are only mythical or functional personifications, the significance of which is solely to underline in a dramatic fashion the hold which evil and sin have on mankind,” views which maintain that these names “are only words,” which are up to us “to decipher ... at the cost of having to find another way of inculcating into Christians the duty of struggling against all the forms evil in the world.”²

This document then goes on to rehearse the data for such beliefs in the New Testament (and particularly in the teachings of Jesus), in the teachings of the Church fathers (where it is ubiquitous), in the teaching of the Councils and Popes (where precise definitions are sparse), and, finally, in

1. “Christian Faith and Demonology,” 1975, accessed September 9, 2019, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19750626_fede-cristiana-demonologia_en.html.

2. *Ibid.*

the tradition and texts of the liturgy and sacraments (where it has been deemphasized). Stressed in this rehearsal of the data is the original goodness of demons and the dynamic limitations on demonic abilities. Against heretics such as the Marcionites, Manicheans, and Cathars—dualist heretics who affirmed that Satan and his minions were dynamically equal (or nearly equal) to God and his hosts and/or that Satan and his minions were, from the beginning, evil—the Roman Catholic Church presents an opposing teaching.

Recommending reserve, prudence, and discernment, as well as further research on the theme of the demonic, “Christian Faith and Demonology” concludes by warning against the arrogance which comes with an “inebriation of knowledge and technical power” and counsels modesty “to make room for the data of revelation.”³ Near its conclusion, however, this document opens the possibility for exactly the kind of thought experiment I will conduct in this paper.

It is true that in times gone by there was a certain ingenuous fear of meeting some devil at the crossroads of our thoughts. But would it be any less naive today to assert that our methods will soon say the last word on the depths of the consciousness, the meeting place of the mysterious relationships between body and soul, between the supernatural, the preternatural and the human, between reason and revelation? For these questions have always been considered vast and complex. As far as our modern methods are concerned, they, like those of the past, have limits beyond which they cannot go.⁴

From this document’s brief (though broad) survey of the grounds for such belief, it is possible to extract a set of propositions which describe the core of an “authorized” view on demonology in the Roman Catholic tradition.

- (1) Only God can create.
- (2) Everything created is contingent on God.
- (3) Angels are among the first creations of God.
- (4) No angel possesses power tantamount to God’s infinite power.
- (5) All the angels were created naturally good.
- (6) Satan and the demons are apostate angels.
- (7) The apostasy of the demons was a matter of free choice (the result of free and contingent acts of their wills).
- (8) The “fall” of apostate angels [their apostasy] was rooted in their pride and/or malice toward humankind.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

- (9) The apostate angels “*made themselves evil*.” [my italics; *Lateran 4*]
- (10) The demons act “perniciously” against God and humankind [*Lateran 4*]
- (11) Salvation by Christ restores our freedom and removes us from the power of darkness. [Trent]
- (12) To sin, after Baptism, is to abandon oneself to the power of the devil. [Trent]
- (13) The society of sinners forms a “‘mystical’ body of the devil” which mimics the mystical body of Christ.
- (14) History is a hard struggle with forces of darkness, until the last day. [*Gaudium et Spes*]
- (15) The demonic reality (1–14 above) remains an (ultimately) inscrutable enigma, though God permits it inasmuch as it serves his designs and ultimate end.

It is my purpose, here, to take the authorized view seriously, while wedding it to the Girardian understanding of *mimēsis*, and, in the process, to expand its scope and provide some answers to gnawing questions which the authorized view leaves unresolved. In accomplishing this purpose, I hope to show that Girardian mimetic theory retains its explanatory value when the reality of demons is taken seriously as a theological postulate.⁵ In the

5. It is not my intention in this paper to demonstrate why anyone should take the existence of demons seriously. In lieu of an argument, let me cite the reasons provided by a preeminent 20th Century demonographer, Jeffrey Burton Russell: “What do I know about the Devil? (1) I have had a direct experience of a force that I perceive as evil, as having unity and purpose, and as coming from beyond myself. (2) This experience is quite common among sane people in many cultures, so it cannot be dismissed as madness. (3) The experience may appear to come from beyond myself because it arises from my unconscious rather than because it is objectively beyond myself. (4) But the *beyondness* [my italics] is a part of the perception itself, and it is quite common in the perception of others, so that it must be taken seriously. (5) If the experience does come from beyond me, what precisely is the experience of? ... Each person interprets the experience in terms of his own personal and cultural predilections, so that considerable variety exists in the content of reported perceptions. (6) My personal and cultural predilections should be adjusted in terms of what I have learned from the methodology I have chosen. (7) The methodology I have chosen shows a definable development of historical tradition, which asserts, at a minimum, the existence of a principle of evil.... Of course, I am not certain that the Devil exists, much less what he [260] is, if he does exist. All reservations considered, however, I do believe in the personification and principle of evil, call it what you will” Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Devil: perceptions of evil from antiquity to primitive Christianity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 259–60. Nothing during my time as an expert consultant with the Sexual Abuse, Occult Crime, and Victimology Unit of the Michigan State Police, when I taught at Michigan State University, and nothing I have learned or experienced since, has altered my agreement with Russell’s statement.

description that follows, I will not rehearse Girard's complete argument, especially because he focuses much attention on (what I would term) the broadly soteriological. My interest is ontological; I am more interested in *what* or *who* Girard thinks Satan is.

2. GIRARD AND DEMONOLOGY

René Girard's interpretation of the figure of Satan stands midground between Bultmannian demythologization and Biblical literality,⁶ though Girard is kinder to the latter. In thus setting his discussion, Girard purposes to avoid the faults of either extreme. He eschews the outdated Newtonian positivism of Bultmann, a positivism, which—in its temporal chauvinism—attempts a Procrustean deconstruction of the supernatural in the Gospel according to the Kantian understanding of the phenomenal. But he also eschews the passivity of those theologians, who caught in a double bind that renders them discomfited by literal readings that do not sufficiently desacralize Biblical violence, are also unwilling to accept the naïve anti-supernaturalist presuppositions of Bultmann's project.⁷

Though compatible with what I have called “the authorized view,” Girard's interpretation does not preserve the literality of that view. At times, Girard's presentation of Satan sounds as though it affirms Satan's personal existence, but it is actually ideogrammatic or nominally allegorical.⁸ In this, Girard's approach runs contrary to Bultmann's project of

6. Here, I use the term “literalism” to signify a traditional reading of the Scriptures, one which takes the intentions of the author(s) as the basis for the interpretation of the text. I choose it in contrast to the pejorative “literalist,” the cognate of “literalism” its “-ism” ending indicating naïve (and unthinking) ideological orientation. The literal meaning grounds any other interpretations (allegorical, tropological, anagogical) and these other interpretations stand to the literal as another level or aspect of being stands to a primary being, or to a primary level or aspect of being. It is an interpretation of an interpretation. If such second level interpretations contradict the primary interpretation then they must be jettisoned. The literal is, thus, the most inviolate.

7. René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, trans. James G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 194.

8. By ideogrammatic I mean that it acts like an ideogram, that it is a symbol (or name) that refers not to the object signified but to some thing or idea that the object of signification supposed to suggest. This definition is confluent with the definition in the preceding note. A *nominal allegory* is when a name designates not a person but becomes a personal name standing for a quality, process, idea, etc. See Gavriel Ben-Ephraim, “Making and Breaking Meaning: Deconstruction, Four-Level Allegory, and The Metamorphosis,” *Midwest Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (summer 1994): 440.

demythologization. But Girard, in response to the literality of the traditional understanding of Satan, demythologizes that literality in order to treat it allegorically.

Although appreciating the way in which Girard introduces the mimetic into the workings of the satanic, I suggest that his approach is not the only possible one (or even the most theologically fundamental one). Rather, his interpretation of the satanic (as nominally allegorical or ideographic) already presupposes the literal as its basis, especially since Girard does not demonstrate that the allegorical meaning of Satan is the intention of the Scriptures.

Girard's discussion of Satan occurs principally in two works, the earlier "How Can Satan Cast out Satan?" (1993) and the book length treatment *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* (2001). Both show cognizance of his double embarrassment occasioned by theological views which, when approaching the teachings of the New Testament, take the personal existence of Satan seriously or attempt to see the violence of Passion of Jesus as an exorcism comparable to other forms of violence.⁹ Yet, Girard thinks that a phenomenological description of the mimetic component in each can dissipate this embarrassment by showing its cause to be doubly unfounded.¹⁰ Girard proceeds in his demonstration by identifying parallels between the martyrdom of John the Baptist and Jesus. In both cases, the violent mob becomes the metaphorical Behemoth or Leviathan, the satanic familiar or vector bearing the contagion of violent *mimesis*.¹¹ With these observations, Girard is well-positioned to describe how the reflexivity of Satan's self-exorcism is fulfilled by Jesus in an unexpected way.¹²

Working from the narratives of the New Testament, Girard sketches the following portrait. Satan is the mimetic double of Jesus. Jesus recommends imitation and modeling of himself, as does Satan. *Mimēsis*, here, is viewed as neutral and yet the "permanent occasion of sin"; how it is enacted determines its valence.¹³ The difference, however, is that Jesus establishes its positive valence. He recommends docile imitation, imitation in the spirit of

9. René Girard, "Satan," in *The Girard Reader*, ed. James G. Williams (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993), 195; Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, 38.

10. Girard does not say, specifically, how his treatment is phenomenological, but it is at least in the sense that it is thickly descriptive. It may also be descriptive, phenomenologically, in the sense that he is trying to extract an invariant structure which lies behind the New Testament passages.

11. Girard, "Satan," 195; Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, 133–6.

12. Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, 38.

13. Girard, "Satan," 198.

childlike and innocent obedience, imitation in which there can be no rivalry because there is no acquisitive desire in God. Satan, on the other hand, sets himself up in an impossible rivalry with God and is thus emblematic of *mimēsis*'s negative valence.¹⁴

The mimetic negativity of Satan, Girard thinks, is summarized in the virtual synonymy between Satan and the Greek word “*skandalon*.” Now, from the standpoint of Biblical scholarship, Girard’s creative interpretation of this word is not uncontroversial.¹⁵ Satan is a stumbling block who so lames us that further stumbling is unavoidable, and the more we stumble, the more crippled we become. This is the pattern of all addiction as well as the morbid competitiveness which is at the root of violent *mimesis*.¹⁶

The degenerative spiral of competitive scandal does not result in the expected outcome—complete anarchy and consummate internecine violence—but, by the very scapegoat mechanism, it becomes a “self-organizing system,” one which reflexively ameliorates the violence it has instigated. Here, Girard does not appeal to grace, but to scandal’s own self-regulation, to explain the fact that scandals also restore order.¹⁷ Against the traditional reading of these passages, Girard explains that the paradox of Satan casting out Satan is intended as a reality, not as impossibility. This satanic regulative exorcism is not contradicted by the Scapegoat sacrifice but proven by its ability to effect a violent release of mimetic tension.¹⁸ Three other epithets for Satan contribute to an understanding of how scandal is thus driven and regulated. They are: Father of Lies, Accuser, and Murderer. Satan, as the “Father of Lies” is he who also falsely accuses the innocent.¹⁹ As lying “Accuser,” he unjustly selects innocent victims. And, in turning the lambs of God into scapegoats, he not only brings scandal on them in the eyes of

14. *Ibid.*, 197–8.

15. Jeremiah Alberg, in his recent book on scandalous reading, *Beneath the Veil of Strange Verses*, rightly recognizes Gustav Stählin’s works on scandal as *nonpareil*. Jeremiah Alberg, *Beneath the Veil of Strange Verses: Reading Scandalous Texts* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 122 n.3. However, he fails to mention that Stählin’s discussion also expands the semantic field of the term so that it is not simply reducible to the Girardian interpretation. I have in mind especially the meanings that connect it to divine punishment, especially in an apocalyptic setting, and heresy. See Gustav Stählin, “Σκάνδαλον,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1971), 7:339–58.

16. Girard, “Satan,” 198–200; Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, 16–17, 45.

17. Girard, “Satan,” 202.

18. *Ibid.*, 201–3.

19. *Ibid.*, 203–4.

others, he murders them. When murder is sacralized, a temporary *détente* is achieved, and the mimetic cycle begins, again.

Girard thus sees the personification of evil in the New Testament as mythical—as, at least, a partial veiling of the reality of human mimetic violence. His demythologization of Satan’s personhood reveals the actual mechanism at work.

Without a close reading, it might seem that Girard, in thus speaking about Satan, wants it both ways. On one hand, he uses language which seems to express a tacit acceptance of the robust hypostatization of evil that the tradition authorizes, though choosing to give the meaning of “Satan” a new, mimetic inflection. On the other hand, he seems to treat Satan as reducible to violent human *mimēsis*. But it is clear from his various qualifications that this is simply appearance.²⁰ Girard speaks in the way he does because he construes Biblical talk about personified demons within the limits of what C. S. Lewis called “a Platonic myth.”²¹ Then, taking, the New Testament as

20. This is clarified by James G. Williams in his introduction to *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* (Girard 2001, xii). There Satan is called “a power,” “the principle,” “a mechanism,” and a “figure representing” mimetic violence. We are told that “Satan is imagined and symbolized as a person, as a ‘someone,’ because satanic power becomes attached to the victim as the victim mechanism does its work.” James G. Williams, “Introduction,” in *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001), xii. Williams, representing Girard’s view, says that Satan’s parasitism on God’s being means that “he has no real being.” Ibid. Girard is generally coy in his reductive expressions always leaving “wobble room” for the anthropomorphic characterization of Satan. There is one place in *I Saw Satan* where the denial is outright and, I think, theologically mistaken. Girard reasons thusly: “To affirm that Satan has no being, as Christian theology has done, means that Christianity does not oblige us to see him as someone who really exists. The interpretation that assimilates Satan to contagious rivalry and its consequences enables us for the first time to acknowledge the importance of the prince of this world without also endowing him with personal *being*. Traditional theology has rightly refused to do the latter.” [My underscoring.] He continues: “Scandals and Satan are fundamentally the same thing. However, we can observe two important differences between them.” Scandal cannot be teased out in such a way that it produces the sacrificial mechanism, only “the early stages of the mimetic process.” Satan carries the freight of sacrifice by which evil is exorcised by evil. Why then isn’t Satan impersonal? Because Satan “designates the principle consequences of the single victim mechanism, ... Satan is always someone.” Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, 45–6. Without denying the personal existence of Satan, Girard denies that Satan is anyone other than *some human* participant in the sacrificial drama.

21. Anyone who knows Lewis’s writings on myth, and what Girard says about myth, might not grant this immediately. But let’s review the evidence: first Lewis’ description of Platonic myth as reminding “you of something you can’t quite place. I think the something is ‘the whole quality of life as we actually experience it’” C. S. Lewis, *C. S. Lewis Letters to Children* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 81–2. Second, the general features of myth are the following: (1) it is a narrative of events in any medium, (2) about the fantastic or supernatural, (3) in which characterization is unimportant, (4) but which introduces not a plot or suspense but a contemplative object, (5) is serious and not comical, and (6) is numinous or momentous

(*in part*) myth, he construes Satan as no more than a *nominal allegory*.²² For Girard, Satan can be reduced to both a personification of the violent and sacrificial principle of order as well as a personification of the non-sacrificial and violent principle of disorder. (How one is to put these two aspects together consistently, Girard does not explicitly work out.) The problem with moderns is not that they ignore Satan (the personal being) but that they minimize what this ideogram stands for, namely violent mimetic contagion. Thus, the modern believer should take Satan seriously but not necessarily personally: seriously, inasmuch as Satan is the personification of sacrificial violence wherever it is found; seriously, inasmuch as Jesus's death is the consummate exorcism of Satan, in just this sense.²³

A traditionalist, though agreeing with Girard's solicitude on these points, might rightly respond that a much greater danger is to ignore *both* the satanic nature of processes of violence (as relatively ordered *and* disordered) *and* that Satan is a personal reality. There is something peculiar about Girard's demythologization and then allegorization of Satan, for if myths often hide violence, one wonders whether the Girardian treatment of Satan might not have the same effect—to blind us to the violence accomplished by real supernatural beings in which we unwittingly participate. These would include the forms of mimetic violence which are irreducible to the actions of their human participants alone, violence which involves the sacrifice

in what it communicates. C. S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). What is convincing about Girard's message is that it resembles the Platonic *anamnesis* (a remembering of what you never really forgot). With this recognition, the other features of myth fall into place: Satan proposed as an object of spiritual reflection, is to be taken seriously, and his connection with mimetic violence provides the interpretive key which unlocks the momentous significance of the narratives.

22. Girard's view on Satan is resuscitation of one of the two "enlightened" theories of myth from antiquity. This exactly parallels the two "rational" interpretive approaches of the ancient Greeks directed against credulous readings. One was historical-critical, the other was allegorical. Bultmann's approach corresponds to a more sophisticated version of the former, an attempt to separate the historical from the fantastic. Girard rejects Bultmann's project and (tacitly) sides with the Stoics, who (against the historical-critical) proposed the fantastic stories to have a philosophical core, if read symbolically. However, the interpretations of both Bultmann and Girard transform the New Testament from a purported narrative of things that happened into myth, Bultmann's project being to demythologize it and Girard's project being to allegorize it. The problem with both approaches is that they dismiss the literal reading and its traditionally understood priority to allegory. See Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks believe their myths? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 62–6.

23. Girard, "Satan," 210.

of innocents, instigated or directly effected by supernatural beings.²⁴ This possibility, at least, must be entertained. From a traditional perspective, to leave it out means that the full field of violent and mimetic actions between intellectual beings has not been considered.

3. THE THOMISTIC DOCTRINE OF ANALOGY AS INCLUSIVE

OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGY BETWEEN ALL INTELLECTUAL BEINGS
 Given the premise that Satan is a personal being involved in violent mimetic behavior, what guarantees that we can understand that imitation? There must be some relation of similarity between persons to make an understanding of actions intelligible. But angelic personhood and human personhood would seem to be quite different. What makes them comparable? In order to establish that Satan fall and aftermath can be modelled on the basis of the Girardian understanding of desire and mimetic rivalry, it is necessary to establish a common proportion between the consciousness of Satan and human consciousness. The Thomist doctrine of analogy—one of the guides for creative thinking both inside and outside of the Catholic theological tradition for centuries—provides one of the means by which God and his created order can be made intelligible without committing one either to a univocity or equivocity in talk about beings. My thesis is that the Thomistic teaching on the angels is susceptible to expansion along Husserlian lines to establish an analogy between the *psychologies* of humans

24. Here, Karl Rahner can be of some help. Rahner admits that appeal to “spiritualistic phenomena” or the “phenomena of possession” will be met with skepticism. Karl Rahner, “Devil,” in *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopaedia of Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), 2:74b. but admits the reality is a “part of the natural presupposition of human experience” of “supernatural principalities and powers.” *Ibid.*, 2:73a–73b. He cautions that teaching about demons or Satan should neither be put “at the forefront of the hierarchy of truths” nor be superstitiously presented. And though “a perfectly clear distinction between what is purely conceptual distinction” and specific affirmations about “substantial, created and personal principalities” is not possible, neither should “the intrinsic content of the affirmation” be “denied in principle.” *Ibid.*, 2:74b–75a. Therefore, “the devil ... is not to be regarded as a mere mythological personification of evil in the world; the existence of the devil is not to be denied” *Ibid.*, 2:73a. For Rahner, this teaching’s significance lies in its prudent assertion of super-human, personal powers. *Ibid.*, 2:75a. In his later work, “On Angels” (1983), Rahner is more circumspect. He admits the existence of angels and demons is “conceivable” and cautions *the deniers* of their existence that skepticism may be driven by “an innate temptation to trivialize evil in the world” so as to insulate the cosmos against “final perdition” and “original sin.” He warns against the trivialization of “*the evil* and the demonic, permeating all dimensions of existence and the world ... in a spirit of bourgeois optimism.” Karl Rahner, “On Angels,” in *Theological Investigations, Faith and Ministry* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 238, 66.

and angels. But in order to see that this is possible, one must have some idea about what is the Thomist doctrine of analogy is as well as what are the relevant claims of Husserlian rational psychology.

The Thomist Doctrine of Analogy

But what exactly is this doctrine? At least, thirteen expressions of analogy are mentioned in Thomas' corpus, but Thomas probably intended no single doctrine in his writings, rather the commonalities in multiple versions of the doctrine constitute a vast analogical structure, a structure which amounts to an analogy of analogies.²⁵ When scholars have approached this complexity, *de novo*, they have usually found much of the heavy lifting already accomplished in the little, but incredibly dense, treatise by Thomas de Vio, *The Analogy of Names and the Concept of Being*. There, Cajetan systematizes Thomas's various expressions and argues that only the analogy of proportionality is properly analogy. For Cajetan and Thomas, the analogy of proportionality is premised on a view of the universe as a hierarchy of beings gradated according to greater or lesser similarity to God and thus greater or lesser plenitude of being. With this ontology as premise, the doctrine of analogy functions as a semantics of discourse about the levels, but especially about licit scientific discourse about God.

Analogy is a mode of predication halfway between equivocal and univocal description. Speech about God—and other beings—cannot be equivocal because—if things were radically different and there were no common terms of understanding (and hence no common properties), then there would be no possibility of science, something which experience disproves. On the other hand, though univocal predication might work for some things in the created order, it would eliminate the ontological distance between God and his creatures, dissolving the difference between God's infinite perfections and the relative perfections in creatures. The middle way is to understand discourse about the hierarchy of beings as analogical, as a semantics of description which suffers from the defects of neither extreme but preserves the possibility that discourse about this hierarchy may be meaningful but limited. Analogy, as a third alternative, uses common

25. George P. Klubertanz, *Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960), 21. George Klubertanz lists them as: (1) analogy of participation, (2) analogy of likeness, (3) analogy of perfection, (4) analogy of priority, (5) analogy of proportion, (6) analogy of eminence, (7) analogy of cause, (8) analogy of imitation, (9) analogy of proportionality, (10) analogy of deficiency of effect, (11) analogy of comparative excellence, (12) simple analogy vs. analogy following which, and (13) analogy of attribution, reference, or respect. See *ibid.*, 20–34.

terms—goodness, truth, knowledge, etc.—to designate various similarities that hold between beings and their features.

Because God creates the universe as an imperfect finite hierarchical imitation of his infinite perfections, similarity holds between the created attributes and the divine attributes. For Thomas, similarity is an asymmetric relation: creations are similar to God but God is exemplar to creations. Similarity implies likeness and unlikeness, while imitation [*imitation*] of God is an analogous relation that holds at every level of the created order, though angels and humans—as personal beings—are preeminent examples of imitation because they are made in the image and likeness of God. Angels—in their intellectual nature—were made superior in the image.²⁶

Likeness is of two kinds. (1) If two beings share a common property or relation (a proportion), then they are *alike* with respect to that common property, but (2) if two beings share no common qualities (or *relata*) but there is a structural *resemblance* (or proportionality) *between* the two beings' qualities (or relations) then they are also *alike*, but more distantly.²⁷ The comparison of the goodness of God and the goodness of humans would be an the analogy of proportionality, because neither being nor respective feature is shared identically, though a similarity from humankind to God and an exemplarity from God to humankind obtains. God is preeminent in all respects, and the hierarchy of being, creatures comprise an order of greater or lesser eminence. In this order, the intellection of angels and the intellection of humans is comparable as a combination of analogies of proportion and proportionality because formality (the shared term or proportion) is at the root of both, though in other respects there are only similarities (proportionality) between the structures of each, owing to the partial materiality of one and the pure spirituality of the other.

Even given the scale of eminence, the likeness possessed by beings sharing a common property has the effect of diminishing the cognitive and ontic distance between the beings, because the same property is known as the same in each. However, though God is infinitely distant (ontically and epistemologically) from his creatures, this does not negate the proportionality between him and them. This is so because we know that (1) he created them as likenesses and (2) because the appropriate kind of understanding

26. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols. (New York: Benzinger, 1947), 1a, q. 9, a.3, resp. (hereinafter abbreviated as *ST*).

27. Tommaso de Vio Cajetan, *The Analogy of Names and the Concept of Being*, trans. Edward A. Bushinski and Henry J. Koren (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1953), 23–30.

for the kind of likeness in this radical difference—proportionality—is not eliminated by ontic or epistemological distance.

Both being and nonbeing—as these alternatives are scaled and proportioned in the hierarchy of beings—are analogical. Therefore, they can be compared between God and his creatures. Their relative scaling at every level of the cosmic order establishes the ways in which creations imitate God. As important is the statement of Lateran IV against Joachim of Fiore that “[B]etween Creator and creature it is not possible to notice a similarity that a greater dissimilarity cannot be noticed between them” (Lateran IV, Canon 2), it does not undermine the idea of analogical proportionality. It simply puts likeness to God, for any creature, at a unimaginable distance. Because humans are distantly similar to God and are thus distant imitations, what can be said of them in comparison to God can be said analogically, though this must be balanced with the awareness of an infinite distance between God and his creatures.

Phenomenological Psychology

Husserl claimed that the scope of his phenomenological psychology meant that it could be extended to any subject with consciousness. This new psychology, Husserl claimed, was not anticipated either by Lotze or Brentano, and though philosophers of the eighteenth century Wolffean school broached the possibility of a rational or *a priori* psychology, their attempt was naively “ontological-metaphysical” and not nearly as robust.²⁸ Moreover, this opening was quickly stopped by the Kantian critique.²⁹ Husserl claims to have reopened the possibility of an *a priori* psychology, but along other, metaphysically neutral lines.

Like the Wolffean project, Husserlian phenomenological psychology is not an empirical psychology; it does not deal exclusively with “human subjects of this earth and world” but with “ideal essences ... of any knowing subjectivity, ... one which is ideally possible, conceivable in unconditional universality.”³⁰ If this, it possesses two salient features. First, it is thoroughly intentional. “[C]onsciousness is not merely an empty, though also variegated, awareness but a performance accomplished in multiple demonstrable forms and pertinent syntheses, everywhere intentional,

28. Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenological Psychology*, trans. John Scanlon (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), 28/39.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*, 28/39.

directed toward goals, directed toward ideas of truth.”³¹ On the basis of the analysis of intentionality, “a transcendental doctrine of consciousness became possible.”³² This intentional analysis also delivered the possibility of “understanding the interior apperception of all categorical objects and “all verifying performances as logical, axiological, and practical.”³³

Second, phenomenological psychology does not relativize all thought to its historical development but recognizes that “whenever something like numbers, mathematical multiplicities, propositions, theories, [essences], etc.... become objects of consciousness in subjective lived experience, the [requisite] lived experiences ... must have their essentially necessary and everywhere identical structure.”³⁴ This means that any beings that “count, compute, do mathematics”—whether humans, “angels, devils, or gods”—will perform the same operations with an *a priori* necessity.³⁵ *Correlative* to universal and necessary truths there is a *corresponding* realm of necessary *a priori* lived experiences and performances, which are productive of them. These essences, experiences, and performances (as well as their communicability) are necessary to any intersubjective community of *somatic* beings having the same purposes.³⁶

31. Ibid., 26/36.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., 27/38.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid. It is important to clarify what Husserl is claiming and what he is not claiming. He is claiming that whenever mathematics *is produced*, there will be common noematic and noetic features. This means that the path to the development of mathematics *as known by humans* must always be produced in the way that the humans produced it. Husserl does not, I think, intend that the correlation between the end products (essences, theories, propositions) and all lived experiences will—in every case—be isomorphic, merely that there will be a set of intentional acts based upon these experiences which will be productive of a common set of ideal objects. Otherwise, alien beings whose perception is active within a different segment of the electromagnetic spectrum would be incapable of developing mathematics. Their mathematics and our own must simply share an equivalent formal structure. Once that level of formality is attained, then the intentional structure of mathematics would be the same. The content of their alien perceptions will make little difference as long as their perceptions are sufficiently rich to allow them to have insight into the same mathematical relations. He also does not say that the understanding of systems of ideal objects—mathematics, for example—requires the ability to create ideal systems. In fact, the experiences (and abilities) which are originaive of mathematics are much rarer than the experiences (and abilities) which ground the ability to understand mathematical calculation. One can understand a mathematical object or system without understanding how it was produced or without understanding how to build one.

Angels, of course, are not somatic and do not “do” mathematics. They have no powers of sensation, because they are not embodied. Angels have no need for mathematics because mathematics consists of second intentions productive of abstractive generalizations drawn

To make the Husserlian discoveries about intentionality serviceable to Thomas' understanding of spiritual beings, we cannot allow Husserl's squeamishness about metaphysics block our purpose. Jacques Maritain has observed that Husserl avoids metaphysical entanglements only by pretense, and I think we do well, here, to remember Aristotle's demonstration that those who choose not to do metaphysics do bad metaphysics.³⁷

On the other hand, it is the metaphysical neutrality of Husserlian rational psychology that allows its assimilation to the metaphysically positive Thomist ontology of knowledge. And it is the idea of a universal rational psychology that warrants the expansion of Thomist understanding of consciousness with some contemporary psychological discoveries, providing they can be extended beyond human consciousness. The bridge to this expansion is the Husserlian understanding of intentionality.

Thomist and Husserlian philosophies are united by the recognition that intellection is intentional, though talk about the intellection of angels must, in turn, be warranted by an analogicity of intentionality according to Thomas's analogies of proportion and proportionality. My purpose is to unite the Husserlian felicities with Thomist metaphysics to bring some new theological possibilities to light. This is necessary because Thomas's understanding of intentionality, in most ways, is less developed than Husserl's. On the other hand, it should be clear that one accepts the expansion of intentional analysis along Husserlian lines, this does not commit one to the Husserlian project, *in toto*. Intentionality is used as the bridge to establish a psychological analogy between humans, angels, and demons. Insofar as intentionality does not presuppose embodiment and sensation, it will be at the root of similar psychologies in both.

4. THOMIST ANGELOLOGY AND THE "FALL" OF THE DEMONS

Unlike Girard, Thomas Aquinas does not hesitate to associate the name "Satan" with a distinct existing supernatural person, a "fallen" angel. But to understand the consequences of this identification, it is necessary to provide a brief description of Thomist angelology. Though theologians (such as

from concrete sensations, and (by humans) they are manipulated discursively. Angels grasp the "structures" of things directly, in act, without the need for instrumentalities such as mathematics. They may know the same things that mathematics gives humans access to, and they may understand what humans are doing when they do mathematics, but they do not know them by means of mathematics.

37. Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 24 n.3, 106, 07–08 n. 72, 09 n. 76, 06–14.

Karl Rahner) have criticized it as excessive and a “pretext for metaphysical rather than properly theological investigations,” the author of the appendix on “Angelology in the Church and in St. Thomas” in the Blackfriars edition lauds it as “the most brilliant piece of speculation on the subject produced by a Western theologian.”³⁸ The “party affiliation” of the author of that appendix may cast doubt on the objectivity of this latter evaluation, but I think the latter is undeniable: Thomas’s discussions are the *sine qua non* in most subsequent speculations on angelology. For this reason, I begin with Thomas.

Although it would be possible to spend many pages elaborating Thomas’s angelology—one of the most comprehensive twentieth century expositions runs to 383 pages—my purpose in touching on it, is to examine the reason for Lucifer’s reprobation because the reassessment of this reason and the effect of this reassessment on the understanding of Satan’s reprobation which will allow us to reclaim a hypostatic Satan along Girardian lines.³⁹

How and what angels know

According to Thomas Aquinas, angels do not know *in the way* humans know. Humans, according to the Thomas, know because they are in intentional relations to objects in the real world.⁴⁰ Intentional relations are real, (often) willed relations that deliver the formality of the object to the intellect of the thinker so that—following Aristotle—the knower, in a sense, becomes the known (Aristotle, *De Anima*, 3:4:430a:3; *ST*, 1a, q.87, a.1: resp.). According to contemporary Thomists, this idea is the hardest part of the Thomist epistemology for moderns and postmoderns to accept because it vitiates the Cartesian assumption that all knowing is *representational*. The Thomist view is—to the contrary—that all knowing is (in some sense) *presentational*. The intention *presents* the reality, and the concept is its icon or similitude. The intentional act which thus makes the formation of a concept

38. I was made aware of both passages by Mortimer Adler in his book, *The Angels and Us* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 25–6.

39. James Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947).

40. In Thomas, the term intention [*intentio*] is used in a systematically ambiguous way referring to (1) the act of attention or attending to something, (2) the will, aspiration or purpose of an intelligent actor, (3) the relation or the rationale that an injective epistemological relation conveys between an object and subject, (4) the similitude or species, thus conveyed, and/or (5) the concept, rationale, or presentation of the object in consciousness Roy Deferrari, *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 1949), 584a. Sometimes, he uses the word in such a way to imply all connotations simultaneously.

(*con + ceptus*) possible is a grasp of the object that imports the formality of the object and joins it to the intellect of the knower. For humans, sensations compose the data-stream that carries the formality of the object; they are the appearances through which the fundamental structure of the object are conveyed to the passive intellect, where by abstraction—and often after accompanying great effort—the form is extricated by the active intellect and known as a mental being. Human knowing is imperfect inasmuch as it is sense-based. Organic pathologies and rational errors plague the physical body instrumental to concept formation.

Insofar as an angel knows, it knows according to its natural function in the celestial hierarchy. The lower angels know by lesser, more specific, forms which are constitutive of their natures but also “by the help of higher angels.”⁴¹ This help takes the form of the intentional direction of formal specifications which intensively expand the natural congenital forms in the lower orders. The highest angels know through constitutive superior forms congenital to their natures but also through more direct, more sufficient—but not comprehensive or circumscribed—knowledge of God. *More sufficient*, because their supernatural grasp of the essence of God is whole but *not complete*.⁴² God has the ability to expand (illuminate) the content of their natural constitutive forms, supernaturally, but they also grasp these forms realized *in actu*. This means that, though angels, according to their station, have various degrees of understanding of the natural order and its possibilities, not every feature of that order as it exists (or will exist)

41. Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth*, trans. Robert Mulligan, James McGlynn, and Robert Schmidt, 3 vols. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), q.8, a.4, resp.

42. What Thomas asserts may be clearer with reference to an analogy between intentionality and the notions of *focal length*, *aperture*, and *depth of field*. The reach of an intention is analogous to the focal length of a lens. It determines the “ontological” or “cognitive” penetration (power or reach) of an intellect. The scope of an intention is analogous to the aperture on a camera. The narrower the scope of an intention, the more precisely it is able to bring objects within its reach into clarity. The broader the scope of an intention, the less it will be able to attend to the plurality of distinct features with clarity. Finally, just as depth of field describes the distance between the nearest and most distant objects which are in focus in a photographic image (a space which is a cylinder having a particular diameter and depth as a function of aperture and focal length), so an intention may be said to define a maximum whole (or horizon) with which it is possible for a particular consciousness to attend, a horizon defined by its reach and scope. In digital imaging techniques, focus stacking is a method by which different images may be added together to produce an image with greater depth of field. Likewise the Husserlian method of perspectival variation can join separate sets of intentional acts together to produce a wider horizon having greater intelligibility. Intellects are directional, like a camera lens, so that there is a limit or scope beyond which they are incapable of understanding. For Thomas, the intention that delivers (natural and supernatural) knowledge of God delivers it with a limited horizon.

is present, though God, periodically and in advance of future realizations, can illuminate an angel with respect to these possibilities. No finite being can contain the fullness of the infinite. No created intellect can know every purpose or possibility in the godhead, not all the workings of providence, past, present, and future.

As with humans—and presumably any possible kind of intellectual being, if we accept the Husserlian expansion—angels also know intentionally. For angels, this real relation is (1) *reflexive* as between “contained” forms (as object) and their intellects and wills (as subject) and (2) *transmissive* as between a superior and inferior angel or between God and an angel. An important feature of congenital angelic forms and transmission of knowledge among the celestial hierarchy is that the known objects are not representations or virtual. Angelic knowing is not a simulation, nor is it comparable to received images in a television control room. Both the congenital forms within the angels and the illuminations by which they are supernaturally expanded are presentational. By the same act that God causes and knows these formalities to exist in nature the intellectual contents of those existents are also presented to angelic understanding (*ST*, 1a, q.55, a.1, ad.2 & q. 57, a.1, resp.). Put another way, anything an angel knows, it knows with certainty as another presented through itself. The instrumental presentation of (natural and supernatural) realities through and to the angelic natures is what allows Thomas to compare angels to mirrors of different composition each reflecting reality. But this metaphor falls short of conveying the presentational power of their congenital forms. This way, angels know all existing things in act with certainty and according to their intelligibility. This knowing extends “vertically” down to the individual forms that exist in individual beings but also “transversally” to the generic forms are present in actually existing individual beings as instantiations. They also have knowledge of possible forms, both particular and general, but they do not know, except by grace, the hidden purposes of God that have not yet been realized.⁴³

43. From the above, one will rightly conclude that the reach of angelic knowing is astronomically greater than human knowing. Angelic knowledge is also more prescient than human knowing. Angels know some future events with perfect certainty. These events are those that God chooses to reveal to them when he illuminates their understanding, supernaturally. By God’s gratuitous supernatural illuminations, angels may also truthfully know future events, before they occur. When such certain predictions are revealed to angels, these certainties can expand the basis upon what angels anticipate abductively. Human knowledge of the future—except for revelations—is principally based upon reasoning about abductive probabilities, but the *calculable* probability of future things is never perfect. Without divine illumination, angels can also know abductively. When they know in this way, their ability

The limitation of angelic knowledge corresponds to what Husserl characterizes as the horizontal nature of knowledge. The angelic congenital forms correspond to the Husserlian *noemata*, and their valuating, deciding, judging and correspond to the Husserlian *noeses*. The sequence of angelic acts of will, attention, judgment, and movement are constituent of the antecedent, present, and future noetic horizons and the sempiternal analogue of time, and the expansion and illumination of the forms in sempiternity constitute what Husserl would call the noematic horizon or the horizon of their knowledge of things. Thus, with respect to this intentional structure, angelic experience is a higher analogue to human experience.

Satan's fall according to Thomas Aquinas

Thomas, through his numerous discussions of spiritual creatures, is consistent in his explanation of Satan's reprobation, but the question some theologians have raised is whether that explanation is consistent and, if consistent, generally satisfying.

Thomas raises the question of Satan's first sin because of the apparent incomprehensibility of the doctrine that an angel as perfect as Lucifer could commit a damning sin. Thomas works out the answer on the basis of the analogicity of will and desire in intellectual beings.

Thomas notes that it is impossible that Lucifer was evil in nature, because like all creatures he was originally created good by God. To be good in nature means to be inclined appetitively (in desire) toward the good. In angels, there is no question of a division in the order of goods, like the division between carnal and spiritual goods appropriate to human nature, because the angels are spiritual beings without bodies. Therefore, the evil of demons cannot be found in the disordered subordination of spiritual goods to carnal goods.⁴⁴ What remains is that demons can only be evil by their spiritual wills. As originally created, the angels were appetitively ordered to divine wisdom—supernatural and natural—even though their *obediential potency* to perfecting grace was not actualized.⁴⁵ So, when they sinned, they

to predict the future is much better than that of humans, but they do not reason discursively to these predictions. Their knowledge has greater scope, greater certainty, and it is intuitive. For angels, as with humans, revelation reinforces knowledge, but for angels the superiority of both their knowledge and received revelations is inestimably greater than is possible for humans.

44. Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil*, trans. Jean T. Oesterle (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), q.16, a.2, resp. (hereinafter abbreviated as *De Malo*).

45. The phrase "obediential potency" was coined by Thomas Aquinas to account for God's apparent violation of the natural order in miracles. It can be compared of the "backdoor" that

must have sinned against divine wisdom, and to sin against divine wisdom their sinning had to be an act of will (*De Malo*, q.16, a.2, resp.). But how and why did they will something contrary to divine wisdom? And what was that something?

Thomas thinks it is impossible that any intellectual being with unclouded (but not exhaustive) certainty about the natural order can perversely will what is evil as an end in itself. The only possible evil act of will for angels in their original state would have been to will a lesser good in the place of divine wisdom. “So accordingly it must be said that the first evil of the demon’s will was not ... that he willed evil simply, but [that] ... he willed what is simply good and pleasing to himself, [but] not however as following direction of a higher rule, i.e., divine wisdom” (*De Malo*, ad.1). This is Thomas’s take on Origen’s and Pseudo-Dionysius’s descriptions of the *intentional* turning away from a higher rule (the *Summum Bonum*) to obtain an object of desire by instrumentalities other than those provided by God (*De Malo*, ad.1).⁴⁶

software designers intentionally put into a program to have hidden access to it. It is Thomas’ explanation for how what appears as a miraculous violation of a created nature, really represents God’s providential design of all natures with a supernatural susceptibility to extraordinary transformation. Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, trans. English Dominican Friars (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), q.1, a.3, 5. (hereinafter abbreviated as *De Potentia*).

And again: “Augustine’s words ... mean, not that God is unable to do otherwise than nature does, since his works are often contrary to the usual course of nature; but that whatever he does in things is not contrary to nature, but is nature in them, forasmuch as he is the author and controller of nature.... Thus, in all creatures, what God does in them is quasi-natural to them. Wherefore we distinguish in them a twofold potentiality: a natural potentiality in respect of their proper operations and movements, and another, which we call obediential, in respect of what is done in them by God” (*De Potentia*, q.3, a.1, ad.1). “A higher active force can produce a higher effect with the same material: thus, nature can produce gold out of earth and a mixture of other elements, which art cannot do. Hence it is that the same thing has a potentiality for various effects, according to its relation to various agents. Wherefore nothing prevents created nature from being in potentiality to certain effects that can be produced by the power of God, and which cannot be produced by a lower power: this potentiality of nature is called obediential forasmuch as every creature obeys its Creator” (*De Potentia*, q.1, a.3, ad.18).

46. “Turning away” [*apostrophe*], in the LXX and New Testament signifies a detachment of attention and intention, principally indicating God’s displeasure with humans and his temporary disassociation from them as well as indicating the human conative act of going astray. See Gustav Stählin, “Ἀποστρέφω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1971), 7: 719–22. “Turn back towards” [*epistrophē*] signifies the opposite motion—God turning his attention to his people or the sinner returning to communion with God. See *ibid.*, 7: 722–9. These are the two half cycles of the Judaic notion of “*teshuvah*,” though they are adapted by Christian Neoplatonists for metaphysical purposes and by Christian spiritual writers to describe the rejection or return to God. Both ideas have important implications for angelic cognition inasmuch as an angel’s intention (and attention) may be turned to or from God or to and from

Once he establishes the general nature of the disorder of demons, Thomas proceeds to individuate the sin: he asks about the specific sin that Lucifer performed to cause his reprobation. To answer this question, he takes up a common inference based on Scriptural premises, namely that Satan's sin was the desire to be equal to God. He answers this inference in the negative. To correctly understand what God is, it is necessary to know that nothing can equal him. God is self-subsistent and infinitely perfect. No other beings that participate being or perfection—by virtue of their dependence—can possibly be considered equal. In his prelapsarian state, Lucifer must have known this because “it is natural to an intelligence or separated intellect to understand its own substance”—even though this does not mean he would have understood all its supernatural possibilities; and he thus naturally knew that his being was imparted from someone higher, which natural knowledge in him was not yet corrupted by sin; hence it remains that the devil's intellect *could not* grasp the equality of himself with God under the aspect of *possibility* (*De Malo*, a.3, resp.). Also, it was not possible for him to desire equality because for such a desire to be fulfilled, it would mean a substantial change in himself, so that he would have to desire his identity while desiring its negation. Nor for that matter, could Satan have desired anything that he lacked in his natural constitution because from the moment of his creation, he was naturally perfect as the *kind* of being he was, though potentially susceptible to supernatural perfection (*De Malo*, a.3, resp.).

The conclusion Thomas draws, therefore, is that the desire at the root of Satan's sin was the desire to attain his supernatural perfection—perfect happiness—without the assistance of grace. His desire was to attain the beatific vision “by his own perfection” and “without God bestowing grace” (*De Malo*, a.3, resp.). In desiring what only God could effect, Satan—in *this* limited sense—willed equality with God. And it was possible for Satan to will this only because Satan did not know it was impossible to do so.

Thomas's solution dissolves the difficulty of Satan's willing an inherently evil end as well as the difficulty that he willed metaphysical equality with God. Because Lucifer willed a good end to which he was supernaturally ordered, his sin is in the instrumentality of the achievement. Because he refused to be dependent on God—he refused a kind of faithfulness—and desired supernatural beatitude on the basis of his natural powers, he sinned, not on the basis of the end chosen but how he chose to accomplish it

objects. See also: Origen (*De Principiis*: positive turning: 10, 11, 12, 44, 54, 73, 140, 241-243; negative turning: 24, 47, 67, 88, 200; *Gen Hom.* [1982/3rd CE], 2:86, 9:155; *Exod. Hom.* [1982/3rd CE], 2:233-234 5:279;) and Pseudo-Dionysius (*Eccles. Hier.* [1987/6th CE], 216: 433D).

(*De Malo*, a.3, resp.). This is a reiteration of the Biblical notion of turning away; it is a turning away from divine rule which includes the rejection of the necessary dependence of all spirits on God for beatitude. But how can it be that Satan did not know that to attain the beatific vision was impossible and thus the willing of it would have been an impossibility?

Here, Thomas is not perfectly clear, and one must read between the lines for a resolution. He admits the possibility of a kind of imperfect willing in Lucifer called *veillity*, a willing where something *seems* impossible (is “considered impossible” by the knowing subject), *but is not known with certainty to be impossible*, and is therefore willed *under the condition that it is possible* (*De Malo*, rep. 10). Such a willing may also be characterized by an appetite (or desire) which exceeds the clarity of cognition that one has about the object of desire or by a willing which knows about the object desired but has no clear understanding of the possible means of achieving it (*De Malo*, Rep. Cont. 4). From this we can conclude that Lucifer did not have complete knowledge of *how* the beatific vision was to be attained, but that he did have certainty about his dependence on God for illuminative knowledge, though without a reason for the dependence. In other words, the full reason for his epistemic dependence was not available to Lucifer, nor was it completely certain that another path to beatitude was impossible, only that it was not impossible and that God ordained dependence as the prescribed path. That he refused to be dependent on God for beatitude *and* chose to rely on his own natural powers to accomplish this constitutes his sin, a sin that was the analogue of infidelity (*ST*, 2a2ae, q.5, a.1, resp.). His act was an act in which pride drove disobedience, and this pride was a species of idolatry. The root of his sin was a rejection of dependence on God, and the substitution of self as what was to be depended upon for the achievement of beatitude. But it is not admissible to say that Satan was disobedient based upon a fundamentally contradictory choice, for that is what the attempt to be God would be for a being created as superior as he, and such a choice would be an impossibility.

5. PSYCHOANALYTIC AND GIRARDIAN AUGMENTATIONS

OF THOMAS AQUINAS’S THEORY OF THE FALL

If we push the Thomist analysis of Satan’s fall a little further, we see the complementarity of Girardian theory. (1) We may ask whether an antecedent intellectual state functioned as a precondition of that choice (and whether that precondition might find analogies in all circumstances of dependence, such as the state of Adam and Eve before their fall). (Rest assured, this pushing of the envelope is not an attempt to elicit sympathy for

the devil, merely to raise a question about the analogicity of the psychological preconditions for infidelity.) (2) We may ask about the consequences of Satan's sin and whether some contemporary psychoanalytic and Girardian notions might not shed light—again by way of analogy—on the self-inflicted pathology consequent upon his sin.

Anxiety as a precondition of the Fall

Because Thomas tends to treat faith almost entirely in intellectual terms, he neglects one of its scriptural dimensions, which is that of dependence. This means that Thomas ignores the discomfort of Satan's original situation, the situation of any being expected to exist in faithful relation to God. For Christianity, it is axiomatic that God intends that his creatures live in awareness of their dependence on him. Once this neglected dimension is addressed in the context of Satan's fall, it becomes clear that his fall is the result of (what one might call) a crisis of faith. The consequence of this line of thinking is that Satan's choice was an unfaithful choice.

But how did this crisis emerge? Though, here, we move into uncharted waters, it seems to me that we are helped in understanding Satan's choice by recognizing that it—like that of Adam and Eve—was preceded by a state of disquiet and uncertainty, a state of anxiety. As is well known, this is the state that Kierkegaard designated by the Danish word "*angst*." *Angst* is common to all beings confronted with possibility, expected dependence, and apprehension.

Kierkegaard describes anxiety (*angst*) as the psychological affect experienced by Adam and Eve when confronted by God's prohibition of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He delineates five features: (1) it presupposes a state where innocence is ignorance; (2) it is the "qualification of dreaming spirit," where "the spirit projects its own actuality, but this actuality is nothing, and innocence always sees this actuality outside of itself"; (3) it is, paradoxically, "*a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy*"—in other words, it desires what it fears, and it fears what it desires—it is a frightening fascination; (4) it is the result of a prohibition because the prohibition "awakens ... freedom's possibility" (to modify the Kantian dictum, *ought not implies can*); (5) the possibility of violating the prohibition is terrifying, even as the meaning of the prohibition and its consequences are unknown.⁴⁷

47. Soren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation of the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, trans. Reidar Thomte and Albert Anderson

For Kierkegaard, the anxiety of the primordial couple was awakened by their awareness of a freedom to do the prohibited, and this was to be in a state where knowledge, good, evil, and death (as yet) had no familiarity. In their innocence, they had no prior specific experience of the consequences of the sin they would commit. Though God's prohibition was terrifying, the only consequences they recognized, prior to their disobedience, were those they dreamily imagined they might have—greater actuality by possessing something prohibited by God. In this, they were affirmed by the satanic tempter. For Kierkegaard, the moral of the narrative is provided retroactively in the discovery of the consequences, but is told as if all of the consequences were known from the start. Whether they understood the deep significance of their sin or not, their sin was the sin of infidelity, of self-idolatry, pride, the desire to be godlike without the assistance of God.

Some of the Church Fathers have argued that at the root of this first sin was impatience, and on its surface this claim seems quite superficial, until one reflects on how impatience is often the partner to anxiety.⁴⁸ Faithful waiting on God is necessarily a state charged with anxiety, and anxiety is conducive to an impatience which can be an inducement to act precipitously. Sometimes, the overriding concern to resolve the anxiety leads one to act unfaithfully.⁴⁹

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 37–46, 42 n. 47.

48. This is a *topos* for some Patristic theologians, especially Tertullian. In his treatise, *On Patience*, Tertullian describes the motivation for the original sin in the following terms: "Therefore I detect the nativity of impatience in the devil himself, at that very time when he impatiently bore that the Lord God subjected the universal works which He had made to His own image, that is, to man. For if he had endured (that), he would not have grieved; nor would he have envied man if he had not grieved. Accordingly, he deceived him, because he had envied him; but he had envied because he had grieved: he had grieved because, of course, he had not patiently borne.... But, however, having been instructed, by his own experiment, what an aid to sinning was that which he had been the first to feel, and by means of which he had entered on his course of delinquency, he called the same to his assistance for the thrusting of man into crime. The woman, immediately on being met by him ... was ... breathed on by a spirit infected with impatience: so certain is it that she would never have sinned at all, if she had honored the divine edict by maintaining her patience to the end." Tertullian, "On Patience," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Alan Menzies (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 5. Inspect this important passage, at length, to get an idea of the importance Tertullian assigns to the vice of impatience.

49. The idea that impatience is connected to sin is what also allows an interesting contextualization of the story of Job, which can, then, be read as a *midrash* on the story of the fall of Satan and Adam and Eve. Read in this light, the story of Job is the story of a contest between adversaries who presume upon Job to make a premature, and hence impatient, unfaithful, and untruthful, judgment of the meaning of his sufferings, and the patient Job, who carries on to the end to receive eventual enlightenment.

Though Kierkegaard did not relate anxiety to the fall of Satan, but only to that of Adam and Eve, his schema is compatible with Thomas's account of Lucifer's fall and, I think, it lends it added depth. Nevertheless, some modifications are required. Now although Thomas does not describe the fall of Lucifer in precisely these terms, he provides, in his own vocabulary, most of the tools to bring his exposition into conformity with my proposed expansion. Thomas admits sorrow or pain as a spiritual state which is the result of conjunction with evil and the perception of this conjunction (*ST*, 2a2ae, q.35, a.1, resp.). He recognizes that this inward, spiritual state is greater and more acute than physical pain (*ST*, a., resp.). The greater the evil—or the greater the impediment to the good—the greater the sorrow/pain (*ST* a.7, ad.2). He notes that impediments to contemplation can be especially dolorous (*ST* a.7, ad.2) and that any removal, hindrance, or delay to the achievement of the desired good is sorrow/pain and loss of hope (*ST* q.36, a.2, resp. & ad.3). Because the greater the good with which one desires union, and the more painful the delay or impediment, the greatest pain is caused by an obstacle to the perfection of one's nature, which is a creature's greatest good (*ST*, a.3, ad.1). Finally, Thomas even characterizes anxiety as a species of dolor. Anxiety (or perplexity) occurs when one is put in a situation that the mind is so obsessed by an impediment to the achievement of the desired good that instead of fleeing the situation, one is transfixed by it (*ST* q.35, a.8, resp.).

According to Thomas, a remedy for this kind of mental anguish is the supernatural virtue of patience. "Patience safeguards the mind from being overcome by sorrow" (or anxiety) (*ST*, 2a2ae, q.136, a.1, ad.3). Patience is caused by the love of the highest good—God—in preference to all other lesser goods, but this kind of love is possible only if God helps creatures to have it by his grace (*ST*, a.3, resp. & ad.2). When in the pain of his anxiety, Lucifer began to lose faith and impatiently turn to his own means, rather than invite grace, he sealed his fate.

Given Thomas's characterization of Lucifer as incredibly intelligent and created with grace, it is impossible that ignorance like that of the primordial parents would have found parity in Lucifer. Yet, his existential situation would not have been completely dissimilar. Lucifer was expected to wait faithfully on God, dependent on God for illuminations he could not anticipate yet greatly desired, and an ultimate perfection he could not immediately effect, one can imagine how anxiety might well up in a being so aware of his superior powers and so prescient in his anticipations of cosmic events. This anxiety would be not have been somatic but purely intellectual and conative. It would have been the anxiety of *incertitude*,

anxiety being the equipollent middle state between complete certainty and uncertainty.

The anxiety that Satan experienced was a metastable state antecedent to the unfaithful act that resolved it.⁵⁰ In contrast, to live faithfully is to find oneself in anxiety but to dissolve this anxiety repetitively through patience, dependence, and submission to grace. In psychological terms, Lucifer's sin was an impatient response to anxiety, this anxiety resulting in what was tantamount to a spiritual trauma. Especially, in any being whose nature is spiritual and intellectual from top to bottom, the anxiety of uncertainty and dependence would be extraordinary. The drive to resolve this anxiety would have been powerful, especially in a being whose nature was to seek certitude, especially when he reckoned that there was a slight possibility that he might achieve the actualization of his being without having to wait on God.

But, even though it would surely challenge faithfulness, anxiety cannot be reckoned a sufficient cause of infidelity.⁵¹ Lucifer freely chose to be Satan, and he did so based on an expansive but fallible horizon of unfaithful expectations and possibilities. Immediately after his choice, however, the conditions of his existence changed drastically.

As a consequence of his sin, both Thomas and the IV Lateran tell us, *he made himself evil* (Lateran IV, Canon 1). This reflexive nihilation—this self-induced pathology—can be worked out along a number of lines. Thomas tells us that one of the consequences would have been that he was forever cut off from grace and the beatific vision. This would have meant a diminishment of his powers of precognition. He must subsequently rely upon his natural knowledge of the cosmic horizon without subsequent gracious illuminations. Anything about the future, after his last illuminative expansion before his fall, would be known as a mere preapprehensive probability. He would no longer have certain knowledge of the future that divine illuminations once brought. This also means that any direct insight into the workings of human wills would also be withheld, since created

50. Here the meaning of Sartrean "Bad Faith" is transferred to the Satanic tactic. This is especially admissible because of the way Sartre uses the term to indicate a precarious state which is always threatening to transmute into something else, while preserving its tenor. Satanic strategy is unpredictable but directed to characteristic ends. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), 90, 113.

51. Anxiety is not fundamentally somatic or emotional, though in embodied beings, it will have such consequences. If we accept the analogicity of this state, then as long as we do not confuse its intellectual nature with its somatic manifestations, we may call such anxiety a primal trauma.

beings only receive such knowledge as a grace. So, as a first effect, Satan's knowledge of the future would be much diminished. He would experience the future of those objects not subject to necessary causation but as mere probabilities. Nevertheless, according to Thomas, demonic knowing would continue to be expanded naturally as instantiations of their congenital forms were realized in the world and as God continued to allow angels to impart knowledge to the demons (*ST*, 1a, q.64, a.1, ad.5).

Second, Satan's desire for beatitude would be blocked, in the instant Satan willfully turned from God's grace. This blockage begins synergistically as both autonomous and heteronomous but, then, is reactively responded to autonomously.⁵² Now as an angel whose very existence is bound up with the desire to know, this blockage would have constituted a second great anxiety; this would have been an anxiety of frustrated purpose. If blockage had not been expected by Satan as a consequence of his unfaithful act, if because of his incomplete understanding of the stakes, he imagined that it was possible for God to forgive him for what he in part could not anticipate, then it is possible that a demonic analogue to anger (or rage) was his response to blockage. This rage might also be interpreted as the result of the demonic analogue to what psychoanalysts call a narcissistic wound.⁵³

Here, of course, there is no question of anger having emotional or somatic correlates. Even so, there is a sense in which anger can be redefined for purely intellectual beings; this as would be: malice directed toward someone because of a perceived injustice. Here, anger is the description of the effect of malice from the side of Satan's victims (*ST* [1947/1265-1274], 1a, q.59, a.4: ad.1). By this definition, emotion need not figure into the description. Thus, Satan's will to power would have remained intact, only in its post-lapsarian state he would have sought the only outlets to action available to accomplishment. It is here where his mimetic rivalry with God begins. It is clear from everything that is said about Satan (within the authorized account) that Satan is no Manichean, Marcionite, or Gnostic second principle. His power and knowledge fall infinitely short of his creator, and he

52. Put another way, Satan would have been uncooperative with God's grace and in that motion God's grace would have been withdrawn.

53. A narcissistic wound is an injury to the narcissist's grandiose self-image. In humans it carries the aura of threat after the trauma has been experienced, and the aftereffects of the trauma continue to contribute to the impairment of the narcissist's judgment and perception of reality. Narcissistic trauma may issue in rage, and this rage is usually bound up with the desire to seek revenge on the offending party. The psychosis connected with Narcissism is delusional. Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 8. Such traumas may be the result of frustrated expectations of approving acceptance. *Ibid.*, 160.

must, in the first and second moments of this drama, know this. What we are then confronted with is the question: "How was Satan's Promethean project transformed into a Sisyphean project?"

Trauma as the response to malice after the Fall:

Here, we have recourse to the authorized view of demons, the Thomistic doctrine of analogy, and psychoanalytic theory to help answer the question. Thomas argues that there would have been fixity of will subsequent to Satan's choice. From this, I think it is a plausible theological hypothesis that there must have also been a third moment to the fall of Satan, that fixity of will, driven by the malice of a perceived injustice caused Satan to do reflexive "harm" to his own psychology, caused him willfully to alter the structure of his intentional awareness to exclude any datum that did not square with his own sense of justice. This meant that he chose to truncate his own intellect to prevent any view of the pursuit of beatitude which did not confirm his own righteousness. In this turning away from truth, Satan effected a permanent self-enclosure in consciousness; self-enclosure is the mark of the demonic, according to Kierkegaard, and a symptom of psychopathology according to psychoanalysts.⁵⁴

The simplicity of angels as spiritual beings means that the psychoanalytic analogue for this division of consciousness must be simplified, as well. In this respect, angels have only five features which need to be taken into consideration, here: (1) ego, (2) volition, (3) intentionality, (4) natural forms, and (5) awareness of antecedent, present, and future experiential horizons. If repression resulting in the division of consciousness has an analogue in angelic psychology, then it must be explained in terms of these five features. Unlike human repression, there would not be any protective automatisms at work causing the repression, because an angel has complete mastery over its consciousness, excepting divine illumination. Thus, in its initial movement, its intention to darken itself, to cut itself off from unpleasant realizations, must be willed consciously and freely. Later, the

54. Kierkegaard argues that the demonic is anxiety about the good itself, an unfree relation to the good, but it is a particular kind of unfreedom Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 118–9. It is unfreedom posited as freedom, because real freedom has been lost. "The demonic is freedom that wants to close itself off," though this is an impossibility *ibid.*, 123. It wishes to be incommunicado, mute, out of relation with anything free or expansive or whole, but its anxiety is that it must constantly be in relation to what it tries to close itself off from *ibid.*, 124. Spiritually, it manifests itself as incertitude in superstition and unbelief *ibid.*, 142. Withdrawal is also a moment in narcissistic rage.

act of willful darkening would have been forgotten in the haze of a self-induced amnesia. This darkening, in Husserlian terms, means a permanent narrowing of both the noematic and noetic horizons within the demon's consciousness, that is, a drastic narrowing of the awareness of the demon's self, its congenital forms, its past, and its outlook. It must be a reflexive mechanical impairment which is, indeed, conditioned by anxiety, though anxiety is not a sufficient condition for this division to occur without volition. Only *intentional* self-deception—the equivalent of a psychotic delusion—allows Satan to go to war against God with any expectation of having a decisive effect. Erik Erikson provides one of the keys to explain Satan's sin as a self-induced pathology in his classic essay, "Psychological Aspects of Totalitarianism."

Satan is a Totalitarian

In the wake of the ideologies of the first half of the century, Erik Erikson mused that the totalitarian temptation was the result of the impairment of childhood capabilities resulting in an "impotent rage ... stored up where energy should be free for productive transformation."⁵⁵ The traumas of childhood mean that "the individual develops an amnesia concerning crucial childhood experiences; there is good reason to suspect that this individual amnesia is paralleled by a universal blind spot in the interpretation of history."⁵⁶ About this well-known phenomenon, "suggestive generalizations have emerged ... in regard to certain analogies between patterns of child rearing, ways, of conceptualizing the world, and inclination toward political creeds."⁵⁷ Erikson finds that, among the pathological and neurotics, conversion to a totalitarian view is tantamount to a realignment (or transvaluation) that is accompanied by movement from wholeness to totality.⁵⁸ The suddenness with which an individual may shift from an apparently wholesome view to a totalizing view is in proportion to the rage which the individual has contained until acute anxieties cause them to be released.⁵⁹ This movement from wholeness to totality Erikson characterizes as a movement from a structure possessing "a sound, organic, progressive

55. Erik Erickson, "Wholeness and Totality," in *Totalitarianism. proceedings of a conference held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1954), 157.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*, 157–8.

58. *Ibid.*, 158–60.

59. *Ibid.*, 160–1.

mutuality between diversified functions ... within an entirety, the boundaries of which are open and fluent” to a structure “in which an absolute boundary is emphasized ... [with] arbitrary delineation,” its exclusivity and enclosure being absolute.⁶⁰

Wholeness is an orientation correlative to a sense of basic trust, while totalism is an orientation of basic mistrust, a state proven by clinical evidence, to be “accompanied by an experience of ‘total’ rage, with fantasies of total domination of the sources of pleasure and provision.”⁶¹ The movement from wholeness to totalism is caused by damage done to a subject’s sense of wholeness. For humans, the reconfiguration of self as a totality is an infantile (or more primitive) response to survival.⁶²

In Husserlian terms, and according to the analogy of proportionality, the wholesome individual—an angel, for example—lives within a horizon open to the grace of God, an openness which entails acceptance of the surprises that this brings, but the totalizing individual—Satan (for our purposes)—lives within an intentionally foreshortened horizon, a horizon closes to any possibilities he does not wish to notice. If we hypothesize an analogy between human rage and satanic rage—satanic rage understood as *malice directed toward God because of a perceived injustice*—we have some insight into how containment of that rage induces a second anxiety in Satan *after* his fall, one which occasions him to adopt a view which is the inverse of the providential order, one made possible by a warped intentionality. He adopts this inversion because of his hatred for his containment; he “lobotomizes” himself and thus divides consciousness in response to the second trauma, which is that of being cut off from beatitude.

Aside from the refusal to attend to realities of his situation, his will is pathologically set to think that he can overcome his opponent or, at least, undermine his opponent’s purpose. His is an attempt to create a consistent horizon within which he can exercise his freedom, but in any contest with a supreme being, the desire for freedom or a truncated consistency outside the limits of the providential order are delusional. In Satan, any thoughts contradictory to his totalization of the natural order are put to sleep. Satan, in the Eriksonian sense, becomes the first totalitarian thinker. Thus, Erikson helps explain how an incredibly intelligent and powerful (though finite) being can assume the role of adversary to his creator, who is incomparably superior. I would argue that it is really only after this

60. *Ibid.*, 161–2.

61. *Ibid.*, 163.

62. *Ibid.*, 162.

self-induced pathology, that it is possible for Satan to play the role of mimetic rival to God. Prior to this pathology, God, at most, was an external or transcendent mediator.

*How is it possible to give this account of Satan's fall
a Girardian reading?*

I would argue that it is only after Satan becomes pathological in his totalization of reality that his mimetic rivalry with God commences. He only discovers God as a model-obstacle at the end of his self-idolatrous apostasy. In the first moment in the drama of his reprobation, both share a common desire, both desire beatitude for Lucifer, but the will for beatitude is attached to a specific instrumentality. Connected with God's desire for Lucifer's beatitude is the condition that Lucifer exist in a dependence relationship to God, one which is tantamount to waiting on God, an analogous relationship reproduced throughout the created order but especially among beings who are self-aware. Defining Lucifer's desire for his own beatitude is his intention to achieve this beatitude without this dependence, and to quell the anxiety of possibility, by finding certainty in his own knowledge and power.

This intention—as a defining (self-idolatrous) volition—is blocked by God as an impossibility. Though the impossibility of the achievement of his choice was not fully understood by Lucifer, the sin could not simply have been a matter of a mistake about improper means, *per se*. According to a reading of the limits that Thomas places on angelic knowledge, it was possible that Lucifer erred in assessing achievability of an autonomous beatitude because for Lucifer to have known about its impossibility and still attempt it would have been irrational, something precluded in his original state. On the other hand, for God to punish Lucifer merely for the finitude with which he created him—for making a factual mistake about a possibility not fully revealed—is not possible, either. No, Lucifer's sin was in *what* he chose as *the means in relation to a specific end*; this is his act of infidelity.⁶³ He turned to a created thing (i.e., himself) as an instrumental

63. It seems that fidelity, faithfulness, as willingness to be in a dependence relationship to God is required of the angels. It is not impossible to interpret the two moments of their beatification according to this stipulation. If charity is the actualization of faith, then charity is in faith and is continuous with faith. If, in the first moment, the movement of the angels is a movement to the perfection of charity and fixity of their wills in charity, then that movement is an analogue of the human movement from faith to its perfection in charity. Likewise, an act of will, contrary to faith, also undermines charity and remains fixed in infidelity. Angels are challenged with a single choice; that choice is made with sufficient but not infinite knowledge of God and his providence.

substitute for God in order to achieve a state of beatitude for himself but without God. And this was only possible because his own glorious nature became for him a fascination, a stumbling block, a *skandalon*. His own nature became the idol of his determined will.

Only when his design to achieve beatitude was blocked did Lucifer (now Satan) fantasize God as model/obstacle to his desire. It is then that the mimetic rivalry begins with a vengeance. Clearly God is an obstacle, but because of the infinite dynamic gulf between the two, he can hardly be a rival in any meaningful sense. In response, Satan willfully blinds himself to the impossibility of his project and mimetically becomes the inverse model/obstacle to God. As Girard has said, there is nothing less rational than the accelerating rivalry of *mimēsis*. The inverse symmetry of this rivalry—as Girard has rightly noted—is expressed in the antithetical titles given to God and Satan in the scripture. But Girard's list is shorter than it might be. God is the Father of Lights, Satan the Father of Lies; God is Paraclete, Satan is Adversary; God is Lord of Hosts, Satan is Lord of Flies (Beelzebub); God is the Lord of Creation/Creator, Satan is Apollyon (Abaddon or the Lord of Destruction)/Destroyer; God is Redeemer; Satan is Accuser. There are others, as well. Each of these titles expresses a rivalry where God and Satan act (at least in the consciousness of Satan) as models/obstacles to one another, except that in the traditional understanding, a real personal rival to God actually exists.

The rivalry between Satan and God is chiefly constructed from Satan's perspective: there can really be no rivalry between an omniscient and omnipotent being and a finite contender. The outcome of the war is always a zero-sum game in God's favor, though by the rules he has established (e.g., the inviolability of freedom) there will always be a difference between his primordial will (that *all* be saved) and his particular consequent will (that only *some* will be saved). This is expressed in Scripture by the peculiar ambiguity of Satan as adversary and instrument of God. God allows Satan a limited freedom within the parameters of broader purpose. Even so, the end for which God has created the cosmos will be accomplished; there is nothing that Satan can do to prevent this; this God can bring this about while allowing humans freedom of choice.

The objects of desire in this rivalry are at least twofold: (1) maintenance vs. the destruction of the providential order, an order which has human-kind's relation to the creator is a part but not the whole story, and (2) the salvation vs. the damnation of individual humans. Because humans have free choice—and before their fall (and after baptism) freedom of will—Satan has the ability, in any individual case, to be a contributing cause to the sinful

choice of a human. His favorite victims are the innocent, whether innocence is understood juridically or aretologically. From within his darkened subjectivity, Satan's battle against God is a war of attrition; it is nothing less than an impossible attempt to win a war with God, casualty after casualty, by seducing humans to make immoral choices and to do horrific things. Viewed as a nominal allegory, Satan may stand for a self-organizing and self-perpetuating process. However, when Satan is viewed as a hypostasis, this limited organization of violence and its attempted perpetuation is the way in which a war of attrition is won. In light of this possibility, the coming of the apocalypse is a mercy. It sets limits on the duration of Satan's war. It puts an end to satanic atrocities.

Why does Satan choose humankind as the object of his malicious rivalry?

Here, the theological answers proposed in the Catholic tradition are not so clear. Thomas Aquinas says that envy followed the sin of pride in angels, so that they envy humankind's good and "the Divine excellence" that "against the devil's will God makes use of man for the Divine glory" (*ST*, 1a q.63, a.2, resp.). The preeminent use of humankind for the divine glory is the incarnation of the *Logos*.

Francisco Suarez glosses this view by making Satan's envy of the hypostatic union between divine and human nature the centerpiece of his understanding the reasons for Satan's reprobation.⁶⁴ Suarez argues that Satan rebelled because he knew that the *Logos*' intention to incarnate was a divine purpose from the beginning of creation and not a consequence of Original Sin; he knew this as a prelapsarian revelation and not as a part of his natural knowledge. It was pride grounding jealousy (his jealousy that God would choose such a weak and hybrid entity, one of matter and spirit rather than a more perfect nature, such as his own) which drove Satan to reprobation.

Suarez's hypothesis, though a theologically possible, seems better situated as a precipitating cause of Satan's rage *after the fall*—something which added insult to injury, as it were—and not as a principal reason. If this was, indeed, a part of the deposit of knowledge Satan possessed before his fall, then it explains his desire to destroy humankind. On the basis of this theological hypothesis, we may say Satan's rivalry is not simply anarchic, a turning of the order of the universe against itself, but it is also a

64. Francisco Suarez, *De Angelis* (Birckmannus, 1621), 7:13.

competition for a desired object possessed by God—humankind—but with the end of destroying it.

But why doesn't Satan, therefore, simply bring about the destruction of humankind? Although to extirpate the providential order (including humankind's roots within it) is certainly his aim, it is not in his power. God restrains him, and he is a finite being, anyway. What he can achieve is only what he is allowed to do—to disrupt the natural order to a limited extent and to repeat, in human souls, the accusations, temptations, the lies intended to instigate negative *mimēsis* as well as other evil actions. Satan's self-delusive quest is—to use the Hegelian phrase—an attempt to realize the "bad infinity" of his desire, that is, to satisfy his infinite desire by multiplying seductions and accusations without end. That he can even think this an achievable project is an expression of his self-induced psychopathology. No doubt, the automatisms of the mimetic processes of violence provide Satan with one of the most efficient instrumentalities to accomplish this. Whatever role he plays in the physical and metaphysical disorder of creation, his most favored disruption is in indicting the imperfection of human actors, and using this to drive them to despair and perdition, in the face of God's love for them.

Satan's role as adversary means that he both employs features of the providential order and counters them based on his destructive purpose in the moment. His strategy is simple but recondite. We might say, he is the original deconstructionist. He uses the very principles of the divine order as instruments for its undoing. While denying the wholeness, openness, and grace of the created order, he substitutes a series of limited totalizations, categories, and rules and then proceeds to undermine them on the basis of their inadequacy as guides to life. His strategy is to use the law to undermine the Law, forgiveness to undermine Forgiveness, sacrifice to undermine Sacrifice. Whenever false understandings of the law or forgiveness lead to violent scapegoating, he is an agent behind the scenes participating as instigator. He is behind the employment of the violently sacrificial as the promise of restoration of wholeness, a promise which only brings totalization, never wholeness. He enforces a closed horizon of dogmatism to bring the false security of totality but conversely, promises impossible freedom when obedience is required. One of the hallmarks of satanic deception is that it is always purchased at the price of half-truths.

Because of this satanic strategy, early heretical movements such as the Marcionites and Gnostics were deceived, even though they saw the germ of truth in the characterization of an evil god at work in the world. What they got it wrong was their investing this spiritual being with greater

power than he possesses and, then, associating him with the God of the Old Testament. Clearly, such heresies were attempts to impose a theologically totalistic view on the open theological horizon of communications of grace, such as that described in St. Paul's *Letter to the Romans*. It is not by chance that both heresies claim Paul as their pathfinder, but then truncate or supplement his literary corpus to bring it into conformity with their pre-established totalizations.

It seems to me that there is a similar temptation in some Girardian readings of the New Testament, ones that are either similarly Procrustean or supplementary, those that cut off meaning or those that provide an exclusive hidden code. The Girardian view is assumed in advance of the interpretation and establishes the fixed horizon within which the interpretation moves. It totalizes the meaning of the text. Then, any passage is either brought into conformity with this horizon or ignored. This is part of the reason I am advocating a return to a *theologically realist* reading of the demonological passages because: (1) I think such a reading is compatible with Girardian theory, but (2) it prevents a premature interpretive foreclosure of meaning based on misapplication of Girardian theory. From a theological point of view, we can ask the question: "Do we want the tail wagging the dog or the dog wagging its tail?" Girardian theory has no greater claim to totalization, than any other interpretive theory. The claims it does possess will be shown by the fruitfulness of its application. If the Girardian theory has something to say about the demonic in the New Testament, then Girardians should not be afraid of its most robust applications.

6. CONCLUSION

Girard's observation that *mimēsis* is a self-organizing system is brilliant, but this system works only if intelligent (or sentient) beings are involved somewhere in the process. The mimetic is resident in intelligent subjects and is contagiously propagated by subjects. It is, no doubt, necessary to explain that spontaneous, self-organizing capacity in terms of the need of humans to resolve the anxiety of imitation by the repetition of the same sacrificial releases, but the proponents of the traditional view of Satan would argue this is not a *sufficient* explanation of evil. For evil to be approached with unblinking awareness, it is necessary to place another, less visible, intelligence in the mix. The traditionalist maintains there are also real malignant spiritual influences. Understood in this way, the full significance of this conclusion entails a decentering of the war between good and evil, one that makes the human struggle a struggle

over a “backwater” (according to C.S. Lewis’s notion), a mere campaign, in a cosmic struggle.⁶⁵

The witness of Jesus has been one of the great ameliorating influences against Satan’s mimetic hegemony, so much so that when the second century Christian thinkers chose a name for the writings of the four witnesses to Jesus’ teaching, they chose a name drawn from a Hellenistic subgenre whose subtlety is now lost on us. That name was “Gospel” and its meaning—more than mere “good news”—was a testimony to the certainty with which early Christians believed that Jesus had triumphed over the “Prince of the Air.” The full significance of the title Gospel is nothing less than a headline proclaiming “Good News from the Front: Victory [over Evil] is Ours.”⁶⁶ The contents of those gospels—understood according to the intentions of their authors—also indicate that violent *mimēsis* is not reducible to the thoughts and actions of intelligent human actors but is also found in the thoughts and actions of intelligent malevolent spirits, as well.

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65. C. S. Lewis in *The Discarded Image* describes the Medieval view one that makes earth not central to the universe but a peripheral “off-scouring.” In his science fantasy novel, *Out of the Silent Planet*, Lewis describes the earth as fallen, exiled, and cut off from communication with the other planets. See C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 58–9, 62–3; C. S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (New York: Scribners, 1938), 119–23.

66. Gerhard Friedrich, “Εὐαγγλίζομαι,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1971), 2: 707–21; Friedrich, “Εὐαγγέλιον,” 721–36.

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