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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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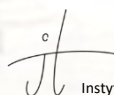
School of Catholic Theology



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**Pro Futuro
Theologiae**

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Dlaczego Tomasz z Akwinu krytykował Immanuela Kanta?

W referacie omówione zostaną wyrażone przez Tomasza i Kanta metareguly metafizyki: językowe, uznawania twierdzeń, stawiania pytań. Podjęta także zostanie próba oceny ich teoriopoznawczej wartości oraz ich faktycznego stosowania w filozofii uprawianej przez wspomnianych myślicieli.

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Aquinas' metaphysical use of the metaphor of distance, proximity and conjunction

In his letter *Contra impugnantes*, Aquinas describes creatures as removed from God (*ab eo distare inceptit*) in accordance with their various essences; in fact, it falls to the rational creature to reconnect (*religio, re-ligare*) with God. Such language speaks of Aquinas' adoption of neo-Platonic metaphysical analysis, and in particular, of the metaphor of distance, proximity and conjunction, in speaking of grades of being and of the differing types of causal analysis. In the line of formal or exemplary causality, beings that are closer to God (*Ipsium Esse*) – by nature or by grace –, have a greater participation in the transcendental perfections. In this sense, prime matter, as pure potency, is ontologically the furthest removed from God. In the line of efficient causality, creation itself is a kind of distancing of the creature from God since its idea apart from creation is “one” with God. Final causality is also thought in terms of distance and proximity where creaturely operation is understood as an approximation (*appropinquare*) towards ends, which are in turn ordered, such that the more perfect creatures tend *per se* towards God and with fewer operations.

The metaphor of distance and proximity also implies the necessity of ontological intermediaries; gaps in ontological “distance” are bridged by beings that share ontological features of both higher and lower levels. Movement in general also requires conjunction with the end through *inclinatio* and ultimately *cognitio* and *intentio* (in the case of intelligent beings).

Aquinas' metaphysical use of this neo-Platonic metaphor may also break down if we necessarily connect the idea of distance with negativity and dispersion. We may rather consider whether distance itself can be thought of positively – participatively – as giftedness and shared creativity.

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Strategies and Methods of Thomas Aquinas in His Expositions of the Divine Names in the Context of the Earlier Latin Tradition of Dionysian Commentaries

The paper aims to present the methods that Thomas Aquinas applied in his commentary on the Divine Names of Pseudo-Dionysius and to assume to what extent they differ from the patterns followed by the earlier Latin Dionysian commentators such as Eriugena, Hugh of Saint Victor, William of Lucca, Robert Grosseteste, Thomas Gallus, and Albert the Great. I will not analyze Thomas's work but demonstrate whether his approach to Dionysius constituted an original and new quality or fell within an earlier tradition of numerous commentaries. It follows that Thomas's approach to Dionysius is, on the one hand, original due to long lemmas and concise explanations that try to capture the methods of the reasoning behind the theses of Dionysius and, on the other hand, is part of a long tradition of commentaries on his writings, the aim of which was not so much to interpret the author's work as to make the text accessible to readers of the time.

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Christ as the keystone and hermeneutical principle of the interpretation of Sacred Scripture in the example of the teaching on Christian freedom in the fifth chapter of the "Super Epistolam S. Pauli Apostoli ad Galatas lectura" by St. Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas employs a kind of biblical hermeneutics open to the metaphysical dimension in his biblical commentaries. John Paul II draws attention to this type of interpretation of the sacred text in his encyclical "Fides et ratio" (see no. 94-95). The Pope writes that the Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, do not merely recount ordinary historical events and do not describe neutral facts, as historicist positivism would have us believe. There is, therefore, a need, also from the point of view of philosophy, to raise the question of the relationship that exists between facts and their meaning, since it gives a distinctive meaning to history and to the life of a concrete person. The application of a hermeneutics open to the metaphysical dimension reveals how the historical and external circumstances, in which the text under study was produced, affect the communication of the truth expressed in it. This method of interpreting Scripture was used in the Middle Ages. It was also used by St. Thomas. In it, Christ was the keystone and the main hermeneutical principle through which it was possible to coordinate the interpretation of the Old Testament with the New and to relate the events and destiny of the biblical characters to their own lives.

The aim of the paper will be to present Jesus Christ as a hermeneutical principle in the Thomasian interpretation of Bible. In order to achieve it, we will present the way in which St Thomas Aquinas introduces the doctrine of Christian freedom using the biblical text of the *Letter to the Galatians* as an example, focusing particularly on its fifth chapter.

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Strategies and communities: From Alexander of Hales to Thomas Aquinas on Scripture, *theologia*, and sacred teaching

Pedagogical strategies always need to be adapted to specific communities. In the 1220s, Alexander of Hales (c. 1185-1245) played an important role in shaping theology at the University of Paris by establishing the four books of *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (d. 1160) as a foundation, alongside Scripture for studying its core themes, namely God, creation, Christ, and the sacraments. Thomas would eventually modify Lombard's structure, which separated discussion of ethics into sin (in Book 2) and the virtues in relation to grace (in Book 3). Yet the vast and unfinished *Summa Halensis*, of which Books 1 and 3 were entrusted by Alexander to John of La Rochelle (c. 1200-45), hints at other approaches, even if they are not fully developed. Alexander and John drew heavily on the *De spiritu et anima*, a Cistercian treatise which sought to combine Augustinian and Boethian ideas. Although notoriously prolix, the *Summa Halensis* introduces some key ideas about reason and human nature, subsequently picked up by Thomas, such as that grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it. Thomas would also expand upon its opening discussion of *doctrina theologiae* as a science. By the early 1260s, Thomas was no longer having to prove himself to Parisian theologians. In the *Summa contra gentiles*, addressed to lovers of philosophy, he experimented with a Boethian pedagogical strategy, based more on reason than authority, avoiding the term *theologia*. By the mid 1260s, however, Thomas decided to bring together these different strategies in a final *Summa*. Although described by William of Tocco in 1317 as *Summa theologiae* it was more often referred to just as Thomas's *Summa*. Here, Thomas is careful not to overuse the word, preferring *sacra doctrina* (more expansive than *doctrina Christiana*) to describe the shared teaching of reason, the Hebrew Scriptures, and the New Testament.

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Aquinas on Human Nature and Its Perfection

In this lecture, I consider two competing interpretations of the Thomistic account of human nature and its perfection in heaven. First, I sketch the evidence in Aquinas's texts for one common interpretation of Aquinas's account; and I show that if this interpretation is right, it leads to conclusions about human nature that are manifestly unacceptable. Next, I show that there is ample support in Aquinas's texts for a different interpretation. Finally, I ask why it is that in Aquinas's work there is ample evidence for two highly disparate accounts of human nature and its perfection.

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Nature, sin, grace: three parameters for analyzing human life

(Human) nature, (original) sin and grace are the three parameters Aquinas uses to analyse the complexity of human life. With regard to human nature, Aquinas manages to reconcile Augustine's idea of a radical change of human nature because of the fall with Aristotle's idea that natures cannot change. He does so by introducing the concept of the 'state of nature' (*status naturae*): that is the actual state in which (human) nature existed, exists or will exist. Once that was the state of integral nature, now it is the state of corrupted nature, and one day it will be the state of glorified nature. Neither of these states is purely natural.

With regard to original sin, Aquinas points out that it not only means the loss of original justice, that is of gifts of grace added to human nature, but also a hereditary disordered disposition in the human soul. In the state of fallen nature, the four morally relevant human powers are wounded: our will suffers from malice, the intellect from ignorance, and the sensitive appetite from weakness and concupiscence.

With regard to grace, Aquinas distinguishes between healing and elevating grace. Through healing grace, God continuously helps human beings to recover from the wounds of original sin, both before and after receiving elevating grace. Elevating or sanctifying grace orders the human will to the supernatural goal of the beatific vision.

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Thomas Aquinas on being and truth. Reflections on his hermeneutical strategies

Thomas Aquinas' analysis of the relation between truth and being in his *De veritate* q. 1 a. 1 has been considered a milestone in the development of his conception of transcendentals (Fabro 1966; Aertsen 2012) and, as Hödl (1992), Decorte (2001) and Aertsen (2003 and 2012) have shown, Aquinas' contemporaries like Henry of Ghent have Thomas' position in mind when presenting their own conception of transcendentals. Moreover, although the main point in both Thomas' and Henry's expositions is to define truth, they both examine the metaphysical implications of the relation between truth and being and the grounds for their distinction. In this context, it is worth noting that the main authority they both discuss is not Aristotle, but Avicenna, and, in the case of Aquinas, a very important passage of Avicenna's text, where he identifies necessary and true being in God (*Metaph.* I c. 8), is notoriously absent.

This paper focuses on Thomas Aquinas' hermeneutical strategies in his analysis of the senses of truth in his *De veritate* q. 1, and on his use of Avicenna's *Metaphysics* in particular. It starts by outlining how Aquinas' inquiry onto truth is related to the one Avicenna carries out in his *Metaphysics* I c. 8, as well as the former frequent references to the latter in his early writings (his *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *De ente et essentia* in particular). In the second part, it presents the role the notion of truth plays in Avicenna's exposition of the primary notions of *res* and *ens* (*Metaph.* I c. 5), as well as his threefold definition of truth. In the third part, it discusses how Thomas deals with the Avicennian senses of truth in his *De veritate* q. 1, even when in his discussion he favors other authors, such as Augustine and Anselm. Some closing remarks will point out the main subjects of the paper.

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Reconsidering the Thomistic Solution to the Problem of Universals

Few philosophical debates are as obscure and central as the 'Problem of Universals'. Unfortunately the hoary and perennial nature of this debate has obscured the question being asked. Scholars and historians of Aquinas alike find it exceedingly difficult to classify his solution to the problem in the typical scheme of categorization. Brian Leftow notes that in our contemporary framing of the problem it is unclear whether he is a nominalist, be it conceptual or predicative; or a conceptualist; or a realist, ardent or moderate; or just plain inconsistent. Jeffrey Brower takes up this important observation and tries to ameliorate these difficulties by de-conflating the medieval and contemporary framings placing strong emphasis on St. Thomas' 'via media' found in his use of common natures and differences in terminological usage. In this paper we seek to advance this discussion by looking at how Gilson's 'Thomist Realism' can further help us navigate this tricky classification and gain insight into the proper classification of Thomistic metaphysics and epistemology.

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Much Ado About Diversity? A Note on Aquinas's Metaphysical Methodology

In this paper, I revisit Aquinas's metaphysical notion of wisdom (*sapientia*) as a science (*scientia*) by zooming in on two texts: (a) article 2 of question 57 of the *Prima Secundae*, and (b) the second lecture of Thomas's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics A*. And I do so with regard to the issue of how the Doctor Communis seeks to balance different types of sciences, particularly higher and lower order forms of knowledge, also against the backdrop of the two extreme views that still haunt current debates, namely "scientistic monism" and "relativistic pluralism". Thus I reassess some of Aquinas's arguments in support of the thesis that epistemological and methodological diversity requires the coordination to an ultimate level, the sapiential level, being a "unifying" and "architectonic" science in its own right.

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Aquinas's Methodological Approach to In Persona Christi: A Study in Exegesis and Theological Development

This paper examines St. Thomas Aquinas's systematic methodology in developing his understanding of in persona Christi, derived from 2 Corinthians 2:10. Aquinas, drawing from the Vulgate's Latin translation of ἐν προσώπῳ χριστοῦ as in persona Christi, interprets the phrase as central to the priest's role as a minister of Christ's authority. In his commentaries, Aquinas analyzes 2 Corinthians 2:10 within the context of forgiveness and apostolic authority, highlighting that a priest's ability to forgive sins stems from acting in persona Christi, not from personal authority. Similarly, in theological treatises like *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas uses this verse to explore the priesthood and sacraments, arguing that priests and bishops act in persona Christi as instruments of Christ's grace, without becoming Christ. This is further clarified in *De forma absolutionis*, where Aquinas applies 2 Corinthians 2:10 to reconciliation, emphasizing the priest's instrumental role. Aquinas extends this concept beyond sacramental contexts, applying it to broader aspects of Christian living. The analysis traces Aquinas's treatment of in persona Christi through his scriptural commentaries and theological treatises. By tracing the evolution of his thought, we demonstrate a shift from a non-sacramental understanding to a broad sacramental application, and finally to a differentiated theological interpretation distinguishing Eucharistic from non-Eucharistic contexts. The study highlights how Aquinas carefully distinguishes between the priest's role as an instrument of Christ's grace and any ontological identification with Christ, particularly in the Eucharist. Special attention is given to his meticulous dissection of the roles of expressions within theological discourse. By focusing on Aquinas's interpretation of 2 Corinthians 2:10, the paper reveals how his interpretative choices, employing distinction and definition to differentiate between Christ's divine authority and the priest's instrumental role, shaped his understanding of in persona Christi.

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Nominal Definitions and Existential Import

Aquinas recognizes the expressions of what a name signifies without existential import. This allows him to both reject the ontological argument and make non-trivial demonstrations of existence. But this seems to contradict the common assumption of the non-emptiness of syllogistic terms and Aristotle's claims that nominal definition can't function as the premises. Analogy of being provides a solution, varying the existential import of the copula. Existence simpliciter turns out to be a non-trivial predicate of either proper or common names. We can classify the principles of Aristotelian sciences according to the mode of predication and analyse how existence posited in the generic premises is inherited by syllogistic consequence. This elucidates the examples of *quia* and *propter quid* demonstrations found in Aquinas and the use of the conclusions of one science in a subalternated one.

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Does Aquinas commit a quantifier-shift fallacy?

Aquinas's Five Ways are probably the most popular arguments for the existence of God in history. The first three of them, however, have been frequently charged with committing a quantifier-shift fallacy. A person who commits a quantifier-shift fallacy reverses the order of two quantifiers and fallaciously argues that since every X has Y, then there is some Y every X has. The aim of my paper will be to evaluate whether Aquinas's First, Second and Third Way might be rightfully charged with committing the quantifier-shift fallacy.

In the first part of the paper, I am going to jointly deal with the First and Second Way due to their structural similarities. I will briefly outline both of the arguments and show why critics accuse Aquinas of committing the quantifier-shift fallacy. I will then argue that a careful reading of Aquinas's arguments does not entitle us to make such an accusation. This conclusion will be backed up by Jan Salamucha's famous formalization of Aquinas's argument from motion.

In the second part of my paper, I am going to present Aquinas's Third Way and describe four possible methods of defending Aquinas against the quantifier-shift-fallacy charge. These methods consist of: (i) supplying; (ii) formalizing; (iii) reinterpreting and (iv) replacing the crucial part of the Third Way. I will conclude by showing that each method requires substantial and controversial assumptions a critic might not agree with.

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Thomas Aquinas' use of Aristotle in the book *Against those who oppose the cult of God and the religious status*

Thomas Aquinas has a long history of being immediately associated to Aristotle. And, no doubt, the influence exerted by the Philosopher's doctrine on his theology as well as his long-lasting hermeneutical engagement with the Aristotelian corpus largely justify this association. The use of conceptual tools drawn from Aristotle's philosophy, however, may come as surprising in certain contexts. Aquinas' early intervention in the Secular-Mendicant quarrel is a case in point. His *Book against those who oppose the cult of God and the religious status* (1256) is the result of his first systematic attempt to exhaustively answer all the main arguments brought by William of Saint-Amour and other critics of the new Orders. The title of the treatise conspicuously features in every major historical account of the conflict which took place mainly inside the University of Paris in the middle of the xiii century. The text itself, however, has failed to attract much attention so far, and the relatively rare studies devoted to it focus, understandably, on grasping Aquinas' notion of evangelical poverty, his views on the organization of the ecclesial community etc. These aspects remain central to the present paper, only shall they be put in a different framework, as it is my aim to pinpoint the role played by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in the construction of Aquinas' argumentative patterns. This will be done with two expectations: (1) acknowledging the influence exerted over Thomas as a young theologian by his long studying Aristotle's moral thought, both in Paris (1246-1248) and in Köln (1248-1251); (2) understanding the importance of the Aristotelian conceptual background for the specific nature and strategy of Aquinas' contribution to the Secular-Mendicant debate of the 1250's.

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The Method of Reasoning Reconstruction in Aquinas's Biblical Exegesis

We are used to the fact that St. Thomas Aquinas benefited from his logical training in his systematic theology works. However, it may be striking that he also applied his logical knowledge in his Biblical commentaries. One of such applications is reconstructing argumentation found in the Scripture. In my paper, I will present and analyse selected cases, including the one based on John 14:10 (where Christ says "I am in the Father and the Father is in me"), to show both the logical mastership of such enterprises, as well as their role in Aquinas's exegesis. I will argue that this strategy is not accidental, but has deep roots in his concept of theology and in his understanding of what the Bible is. I will also show that the method of Biblical reasoning reconstruction gives interesting and important results for theology, and in this way it is effective.

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Aquinas Analysis of the Concept of Faith

In S Th II-II, Aquinas analyses the concept of faith. He distinguishes a number of aspects of faith ('to believe in God', 'to believe God', 'to believe in God'), which are usually overlooked in contemporary studies of faith. Thomas also analyses the differences between knowledge, faith and opinion. In my article, I will examine these different aspects of faith and different concepts of faith, drawing out the assumptions of such an analysis of the concept of faith, emphasising the relational nature of faith and the active role of the semantic correlate of faith, namely God. In line with Bocheński's style of logical analysis, I will describe these relationships in the language of contemporary logic (predicate calculus) .

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St. Thomas Aquinas and Analytic Theology

Analytic theology is primarily distinguished by the fact that it is practiced using the methods of analytical philosophy. In its research, it often draws on the approaches and concepts developed by this philosophical tradition. Analytic theology is characterized by methodological directives concerning language and the ways of justifying statements (Rea, 2009). Often, it is not explicitly stated who qualifies as an analytic theologian, with references made only to specific works that can be identified with this trend.

St. Thomas Aquinas has been, for centuries and for many, a constant point of reference regarding the method of practicing theology. This was also the case for representatives of the so-called Cracow Circle, which operated in the 1930s. The aim of this research group was to assimilate the latest achievements of contemporary logic (formal logic, semiotics, methodology of science) within the framework of philosophy and Catholic theology. Just as St. Thomas, in his time, utilized the best logic known to him—syllogistic logic—for practicing philosophy and theology, so too was it proposed at the beginning of the 20th century to use this new, modern logic in this area. The activities of the Circle were pioneering for the emergence of analytic theology (Porwolik, 2024).

Józef Maria Bocheński (1902-1995), who is the most well-known representative of the Circle, returned to the programmatic ideas of this group towards the end of his life. One of the fruits of his analyses is a work dedicated to the first questions of the *Summa Theologiae* by St. Thomas Aquinas (Bocheński, 2003). This work not only reveals the structure of reasoning identified in the text but also presents a certain method of practicing theology that appears there. A natural question arises: does this method fulfill the methodological directives of analytic theology? Can the *Summa Theologiae*, or at least its initial questions, be considered a work

within the realm of analytic theology, even though the existence of the latter was only officially proclaimed in the 21st century? My answer to this question is affirmative. I will attempt to justify it in my paper.

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Blind reasonings, outlines of arguments, and fully understood proofs. Aquinas on the pragmatics of the progress in understanding arguments

One of the classical topics in the philosophy of mathematics is the nature of the relationship between informal outlines of proofs used in everyday practice and fully formalized proofs; that relationship is far from being obvious. A parallel problem in philosophy – and in particular in scholastic philosophy – seems far more intricate and fundamental.

In my paper I would like to discuss the role Aquinas ascribes to outlines of arguments; for he seems to have offered just outlines of arguments in many crucial cases, and much of the later Thomistic tradition seems to focus on various attempts to get a fuller understanding of those outlines. To tackle the issue, I try to combine two perspectives. (a) On the one hand, there is in Aquinas a serious and rich counterpart of the contemporary debate on “blind reasonings” in the sense of Boghossian (and the contrast between inferential externalism and internalism in general); they belong to the theory of intellectus (as opposed to ratio) and to Aquinas’s philosophy of logic. (b) On the other hand, there are various issues related to the pragmatics of the progress in our understanding of proofs, and some suggestive examples of strategies to better understand proofs to be found in Aquinas’ writings. Outlines of arguments may lack clarity about the logical structure of the reasoning. Good outlines, however (as Aristotle remarked in Et. nik. 1098a20-25), are indispensable starting-point and indispensable basis for further elaborations.

So in my paper I am going to discuss, in the context of (b), some examples of what I take to be good outlines of arguments in Aquinas and try to determine, in the context of (a), what makes them good outlines and what their use consist in.

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Tomasza z Akwinu sposób uzasadnienie niematerialności intelektu

Wystąpienie będzie poświęcone analizie Tomaszowego sposobu uzasadniania niematerialności intelektu. Uwaga zostanie zwrócona na argument, który często nazywany jest „argumentem z blokowania” (ex impedimentia). Ma ona fundamentalne znaczenie dla Tomaszowej antropologii, ale przede wszystkim wiąże się z uzasadnieniem nieśmiertelności duszy ludzkiej. Jego pełne znaczenie jednak można odczytać dopiero w kontekście jego epistemologii.

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The Prospects of Thomistic Economic Theory: An Assessment

Modern economic theory is built on rational choice theory, which assumes that individuals and institutions make decisions by maximizing expected utility based on self-interest and probabilistic outcomes. While this model has strong predictive power, it systematically excludes moral, ethical, and spiritual considerations, reducing decision-making to a purely material calculus. This paper explores the prospects of a Thomistic alternative that would integrate prudence, justice, charity, the common good, and human well-being into economic decision-making.

Drawing on Thomas Aquinas's theory of prudent choice and happiness recent criticisms of the rational choice theory challenge the assumption that utility maximization is the highest form of rationality. Instead, they argue that true rationality must be oriented toward human flourishing and the common good. I examine some of these arguments alongside potential responses from economists. However, the question remains: Is it possible to move beyond a purely critical stance and propose a broader framework for rationality? Furthermore, would it be feasible to develop an augmented choice theory that incorporates Thomistic insights into rational decision-making? To assess this possibility, I draw an analogy to behavioral economics' impact on rational choice theory and present simple illustrative cases integrating Thomistic insights at the micro- and macroeconomic levels.

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Aquinas on the Creation of the World: His Strategies and Methods

St. Thomas Aquinas, in addressing the pivotal 13th-century issue of the creation of the world, demonstrated not only great erudition but also considerable caution and discernment. He sought to respect the authority of Sacred Scripture and the established opinions of the Church Fathers while simultaneously taking into account Aristotle's philosophy, which often stood in tension with these sources. In this context, both his selection of content and the method of its exposition become particularly significant. It is worth noting that the topic of the world's origins provided the scholastic thinker with an opportunity to engage with one of the most fundamental and long-standing problems in the history of philosophy, making use of exegetical techniques and logical reasoning within the domains of theology, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. The objective of this presentation is to examine Aquinas's strategy for presenting the concept of the creation of the material world (STh, I, q. 65-70). It will investigate Aquinas's methodological framework, addressing his process of content selection, choice of philosophical and theological issues, engagement with doctrinal sources, their interpretative use, and techniques of argumentation. In developing his concept of creation, Aquinas began with the text of Sacred Scripture, yet he also engaged with commentaries and a range of other authors – both Christian and non-Christian. In this context, it is particularly interesting to investigate the sources of his thought: To what extent did he rely on widely accepted interpretations derived from St. Augustine or other Church Fathers? To what extent did he draw from Aristotle's philosophy? What other authors did he reference, and why? Did he propose any original solutions in this regard? Addressing these questions will provide a deeper understanding of Aquinas's intellectual methodology and the strategies by which he sought to reconcile theological, philosophical, and exegetical approaches in his discourse on creation.

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Reason's Malign Influence on the Passions: The Cases of Hatred, Desire, and Sorrow in Thomas Aquinas

In 2003, Elisabeth Uffenheimer-Lippens observed that Thomas Aquinas not only affirms that “the passions need reason in order to contribute to the human act,” but also acknowledges “the negative or harmful influence of reason over the passions”—adding that the latter point has almost never been elaborated in the secondary literature.” More than two decades later, her observation remains largely true. Many commentators are happy to dwell on the ways that passions can display inadvisable resistance to reason’s command. They are far more reluctant to explore the ways in which Aquinas thinks that reason itself can go off the rails, particularly with respect to the passions. Commentators overlook this possibility, I suspect, because they do not read deeply enough into Thomas’s treatment of the particular passions in *Summa* 1-2.26-48. In my presentation, I will show that Aquinas identifies some specific ways in which reason can exercise a positively malign influence on the passions. I will proceed by considering how reason itself is capable of deforming or distorting the passions in three particular cases. These are hatred (*odium*), desire, (*concupiscentia*), and sorrow or pain (*tristitia seu dolor*). The aim of my interpretation is not to make Thomas into a proto-Romantic who indiscriminately exalts passion over reason. Such a reading would be implausible and unwarranted. I do, however, show that matters are more complex than is acknowledged by rationalist interpretations which collapse Aquinas’ claim that the passions have “something of their own” (*aliquid proprium*) into the view that what they possess is nothing but an unfortunate and lamentable resistance to reason.

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Using Aquinas' Concept and Method of Knowing the Truth to Critique Umberto Eco's Concept of the Power of Falsity

In the first chapter of his book *Serendipities*, Umberto Eco explores the possibility of the “force of falsity”. False information, when presumed to be true, could have positive consequences. The truth can be discovered in a serendipitous, lunatic, or accidental way. The accidental discovery of America is an example. Columbus had the false belief that he could sail to the Far East by heading west across the Atlantic Ocean. Thinking that the earth was smaller than it actually was, Columbus bravely sailed the vast Pacific Ocean hoping to reach Asia. Thanks to the mistake of Columbus and not heeding accurate calculations of the Salamanca advisors, America was discovered. Another one would be the alleged, centuries-old, disputed document, Donation of Constantine. This alleged decree stipulated the transfer of authority from the Emperor to the Pope as head of Rome and the western part of the Roman Empire. This document has proven to be false. But the alleged donation of Constantine was fortuitous in promoting the Catholic Church and encouraging the expansion of the missions. Another serendipitous example would be religion. There is a temptation for each religion to consider the others as false. And even if all religions are false, then many people have allowed their lives to be influenced by the false.

Using Aquinas' concept and method of knowing Truth, this paper will critique Umberto Eco's concept of the power of falsity. For its attainment, we will first expound what it means for truth to be a judgment of the mind. Then we will analyze why it is both difficult and hard to know the truth. Next we will show what are the methods that Aquinas says in knowing the truth. This will help us make sense of how there could be some power in falsity as asserted by Eco.

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Dialectics as a method of epistemic uncertainty reduction in Thomas Aquinas

The aim of presentation is to show Thomas Aquinas's dialectical method is not merely a tool for organizing theological and philosophical discourse but a strategic mechanism for reducing epistemic uncertainty. By systematically structuring his arguments, Aquinas progressively narrows the range of possible answers, eliminating ambiguity and strengthening the epistemic foundation of his conclusions.

To support this claim, I will examine three key aspects of his methodology: (1) the quaestio structure as a mechanism of epistemic selection, where the careful organization of objections and responses enables the systematic filtration of competing claims, (2) the role of negative dialectics and falsification in refining arguments through systematic refutation, and (3) his strategies for managing indeterminacy in metaphysical and theological reasoning. These elements reveal a deliberate epistemic strategy aimed at securing intellectual certainty within a structured methodological framework.

By analyzing these dimensions, I will demonstrate that Aquinas's approach is not only foundational for scholastic thought but also anticipates principles found in modern epistemology and argumentation theory. This reassessment positions Aquinas as a cognitive strategist whose methodological rigor continues to provide valuable insights for contemporary philosophical discourse.

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Aquinas' Quest for Paul's Meaning in his *Commentary Super Epistolam ad Romanos*

In describing Scripture's literal sense as the author's intention (STI, q. 1, a. 10, co.), Thomas Aquinas clarified a matter that had in previous generations been subject to considerable disagreement. Aquinas' own readers have long understood that any attempt to understand his methods for grasping the intentions of Scripture's authors faces the difficult task of coming to terms with the differences between Thomas' presuppositions and methods and those taken for granted by interpreters of their own times. But any such project is now further complicated by the near absence of consensus among contemporary interpreters on whether authorial intention, or meaning, may even be found in Biblical texts, and if so, how it may be understood. Aquinas did not doubt that St. Paul was alive as an author, albeit one secondary to God. Nor did he doubt that by his writings Paul actively intended to say something to, that is, communicate with, his audience. Examination of Aquinas' prologue to his commentary *Super Epistolam ad Romanos* as well as his expositions of the Epistle will show him maintaining a constant focus on the person and language of Paul. This he does not as a mere historian, but as a thinker attentive to what Paul intended to say.

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Essentia, Virtutes, Operationes – The Second Methodological Principle of Organizing Questions in Summa Theologiae

In the prologue to the *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas explains that one of his primary aims is to present theological issues in a systematic order, best suited for instructing novices. While the overarching framework of *exitus-reditus*—the procession of all creatures from God and their return to Him—provides the general structure, Aquinas introduces an additional organizing principle in the introductions to various treatises. This principle, based on the distinction between *essentia* (essence), *potentiae* (powers), and *operationes* (operations), is particularly evident in the prologue to the treatise on man (ST I, q. 75). It also appears in the introduction to the treatise on angels (ST I, q. 50) and, in a less explicit manner, in the prologue to the questions on God (ST I, q. 2).

Aquinas attributes this method to Pseudo-Dionysius, who employs a similar triadic distinction—*ousia*, *dynamis*, and *energeia*—in *De Coelesti Hierarchia*, albeit in the context of angelic hierarchies. However, a closer examination reveals that Aristotle's *De Anima* (430a) also utilizes this framework, and Aquinas' adaptation bears a stronger resemblance to Aristotle's approach than to that of Pseudo-Dionysius.

This paper explores how Aquinas applies this methodological principle in the *Summa Theologiae*, its philosophical and theological sources, and the extent to which his approach can be considered original.

About the conference

St. Thomas Aquinas had brilliant ideas, which contributed to both theology and philosophy. However, an important part of his success as a theologian and philosopher which can be easily overlooked was his effective planning. In order to gain truth and present it to the readers or listeners (according to the Dominican motto: *contemplata aliis tradere*), it is essential to know how to do that. Aquinas's investigations and presentations are always ordered according to certain patterns and governed by ideas, which he often explains. They also follow clear methodological frameworks.

In the year of the 800th anniversary of his birthday, we would like to focus on strategies he adopts in different types of his production and methods he applies both as a theologian and as a philosopher. We are going to examine the importance and the consequences of such choices, as well as their motivations and inspirations. We will include both those strategies and methods which are explicitly mentioned by Thomas and those which can be traced back. This will enable us to create a picture of Aquinas as a scholar who cared about the correct ways of thinking and scientific procedures.

We decided to gather at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Warsaw in the end of May 2025 to analyse Aquinas's: patterns of work composition, exegetical techniques, hermeneutical strategies, methodology of sciences (including metaphysics, theology, natural sciences), ways of argumentation and argumentative strategies, use of logic, analytical approach, other similar aspects of his work.

The conference has been organised by the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Warsaw, and co-organised by the Faculty of Theology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, in collaboration with partners, including the Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, IGTM – International Society for the Study of Medieval Theology, Instytut Tomistyczny and Pro Futuro Theologiae Foundation.



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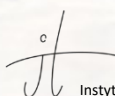
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