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From *Speculum* 22 (1947), 310-341. Republished with permission.

WIT AND MYSTERY: A REVALUATION IN MEDIAEVAL LATIN HYMNODY

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I

Professor J.S.P. Tatlock remarks, in a previous *Speculum* article, that 'not all moderns to whom what is Latin is remote, see that before the late middle ages what is Latin was immediate.'[1] He points out that our tendency unwittingly to make too little of the immediacy of mediaeval Latin results in misconceptions concerning the role of mediaeval vernacular literature, which was essentially a supplement to the literature in Latin. The situation on which Professor Tatlock so pertinently comments has other unfortunate results as well. It readily enough induces an insensitivity to the Latin literature of the Middle Ages itself. Overlooking its immediacy to the mediaeval mind, we fail to approach this literature in terms of the sensibility in which it had its being and tend to regard it as a detached mass of material which we handle rather freely in terms largely of our own prepossessions.

The understanding of much mediaeval literature has suffered from this tendency, and perhaps none of the literature more than the Latin hymnody. The ordinary evaluations of mediaeval Latin hymns and sequences with which one meets give one not so much the impression that one has a balanced consideration of what is in the records as the impression that the corpus of mediaeval Latin liturgical verse has been made a sounding board for nineteenth- and early twentieth-century notions of religious poetry.

It is worth noting how most evaluations of mediaeval Latin hymns come around sooner or later to eulogize two pieces, the *Dies Irae* and the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, as unmistakably the finest of the lot.[2] This is significant because interest in Latin hymnody has grown up within the past hundred and fifty years,[3] and while these two most praised hymns are not by any means representative of all mediaeval Latin hymnody, they are on the other hand both highly representative of that specific development within this hymnody which coincides remarkably with the temper of the age in which the study of Latin hymnody took form. The wave of enthusiasm for these hymns is quite datable: of the fifty English translations of the *Dies Irae* turned up for an article published in 1883,[4] only eight antedate 1805, and of the one hundred and thirty-three translations listed in *A Dictionary of Hymnology*, only nine antedate 1819.[5]

The *Dies Irae* and *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* are notably alike[6] in that they both feature the tender and haunting melancholy, the awesome and plaintive foreboding, and the plangent pathos inevitably associated in the romantic era with serious poetry - or indeed, with anything beautiful. The highest manifestation of beauty is inseparable from sadness, Poe averred for his age.[7] And his poetry shows that the sadness he had in mind

was not simply the tragic note common to a great deal of literature, but something more distinctive, plaintive, a little tearful, and would take readily enough to the *Dies Irae* and the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* while they gave pretty short shrift to great numbers of other mediaeval Latin hymns and sequences.

However, one section of mediaeval Latin hymnody which does not so well fall in with romantic notions of serious poetic achievement can today hope for a better hearing because of current interests which have resulted in the now matured appreciation of the once disreputable 'metaphysical' poetry of seventeenth-century England.8 The age before the present was notably deficient in its ability to respond to such poetry - the worth of which has been a genuine discovery even in scholarly circles - and the resulting coldness toward the considerable quantity of mediaeval Latin hymns which have much in common with this poetry has been one of the great deficiencies persisting to the present in evaluation of the corpus of these hymns.

Present-day requirements for poetry will have their own limitations, but in this particular instance contemporary interests enable us to apply to earlier appraisals a badly needed corrective. So long as wit was taken only as an elaborate, if sophisticated, horseplay, religious poetry which employed it was *ipso facto* hardly worth consideration, for worthwhile religious poetry must, in one way or another, maintain a texture basically serious. To discover, as the past few decades seem to have discovered, that wit can be a vehicle for serious expression is to open the way to long neglected preserves of mediaeval Latin verse.

But it is to do more than that. The trail of wit leads to one of the most vital centers of mediaeval literature. Here Christian teaching does more than merely supply the matter for poetry, and more than merely suggest an 'architectonic' framework for literature (such as one finds often remarked in Dante or Milton and such as provides the basis for obvious, sometimes elaborate, but in the long run, rather uneventful comparisons between grosser details in things like the *Divine Comedy* and the *Summa Theologica*). Rather, at the point to which the trail of wit leads, the very texture of poetry itself - the element which makes literature literature - is seen to come into functional contact with the heart of Christian doctrine, the mysteries distinctive of Christianity as these lie in their own distinctive way within the human mind.

The present study is an attempt to develop in connection with this fact a more comprehensive sense of values concerning mediaeval Latin liturgical poetry through examination of the work of two important authors to whom wit in the spirit of the 'metaphysicals' was quite congenial: Adam of St Victor (d. by 1192) and St Thomas Aquinas (1224/5-1274). The combined lives of these two span a period particularly favorable to the emergence and development of a poetry of wit.

We can here identify wit poetry sufficiently for the present purpose as that poetry which characteristically employs conceit, that is paradoxical or curious and striking comparison and analogy, and which favours the development of wordplay.

II

Adam lived at St Victor's at the end of the period in which the Parisian monastery enjoyed its greatest theological achievement, under Hugh and Richard, who died

respectively in 1141 and 1173. Adam's poetry therefore quite naturally reflects definitely theological interests. It is in connection with these interests that much of his wit emerges.

Infinitus et immensus
Quem non capit ullus sensus
  Nec locorum spatia,

Ex aeterno temporalis,
Ex immenso fit localis,
  Ut restauret omnia.[9]

We find this in a sequence or prose for Christmas ascribed to Adam. The combination of apparent disparates here as the Incarnation is made to unfold itself in paradox is of a piece with the theological world that Adam knew. Hugh had written:

> Dubium non est quin coelestium gaudiorum, et aeternae dulcedinis miram atque inerrabilem suavitatem Virgo ipsa conceperit, quando illud aeternum lumen cum toto majestatis suae fulgore in eam descendit: et quod non capit mundus, totum se intra viscera virginis collocavit.[10]

Paradox carries for Adam from the beginning to the end of Christ's earthly career. In an Easter sequence of his, the poet finds the strangely vivifying quality of Christ's death a paradox, too:

O mors Christi vivifica
Tu Christo nos unifica;

Mors morti non obnoxia,
Da nobis vitae praemia.[11]

More complex is the following, which Adam works out of the mystery of Christ's sacrificial death:

Per mortem nos indebitam
  Solvit a morte debita:

Praedam captans illicitam
  Praedo privatur licita.[12]

The last two lines are the more intricate: the robber (death) for taking illicit plunder (Christ) is deprived of his licit plunder (mankind).

In these passages Adam uses rather straightforward paradox; but there are ways of cutting paradox apart so that it can be inspected in cross section. Thus, in a sequence for the feast of the Holy Trinity Adam writes:

Trinae sit laus unitati,
Sed et simplae trinitati
  Coaeterna gloria.[13]

Explications of the simple doxology ('Glory be the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit') such as this, duplicated in scores of conclusions to liturgical hymns written by many others besides Adam, do not resolve paradox but dissect it into pieces each of which is itself paradoxical: the threefold Unity, the simple Trinity (i.e. the Trinity with no parts in the strict sense), etc. The frame on which the paradoxical sections are stretched for exhibit is often, as here, provided by word-play.

Any number of examples could be adduced to show that Adam's word-play is not mere virtuosity of verbal figure. In a sequence for the Assumption one finds his lines

Verbum patris sine matre
Facta mater sine patre
Genuit in tempore.[14]

The wit here is engaged with the dogmatic truth that in the Godhead as manifested to man through revelation, the Second Person (called by St John at the beginning of his gospel the *Verbum* or Word), and only the Second Person, has an origin, which, although eternal, is nevertheless a generation analogous to that by which a son proceeds from a human father. To this dogma of the eternal generation of the Son, His incarnation in time through a human mother but without a human father is no adventitious accretion but rather a kind of converse corollary, granted the fact that He was somehow to become man. For, as St Paul had explained in Ephesians 3.15, human paternity, and indeed even paternity in animals and plants, is a participation of the divine paternity of the Father, the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. Since the Father, being Infinite God, is Father in an infinite way with regard to His son, Who is also Infinite God, it is rather to be expected that Christ would have no human father. The role of father in His case would seem to be filled in a supereminent degree from all eternity by His Father in heaven.

The father-mother paradox of Adam's, then, traces directly into theological discussion. Adam's fellow-monk Richard had treated expressly the question as to why Christ did not have a human father. It was not that there would have been anything wrong in the sexual relations this would have implied. The difficulty is with the nature of the divine paternity, although Richard apparently agrees with later theologians who will not say that this rules out absolutely the possibility of a human father: rather it only makes it more suitable that Christ should not have one.

> Certe, si Emmanuel noster de utroque sexu nasci voluisset, et hoc ratio exigeret, utrumque ad mundum prolem seminandam mundare potuisset. Sed, si de utroque carnem assumeret, utique et a proprietatis suae similitudine longius recederet, et ad nostram minus appropinquaret. Proprietati enim suae esset dissimile, si patrem et matrem haberet in humanitate, qui solummodo patrem habebat in divinitate.[15]

But Adam's lines and the theological speculation back of them reach beyond Richard of St Victor: they are too deeply embedded in Christian dogma to have taken so late an origin. The material for Adam's paradox had been part of theological equipment at least since St Augustine, who wrote in a sermon:

> Denique natura est Christus et de patre, et de matre; et sine patre, et sine matre: de patre Deus, de matre homo; sine matre Deus, sine patre homo. Generationem ergo ejus quis enarrabit (Isai.53.8); sive illam sine tempore, sive istam sine semine.[16]

In the same hymn for the Assumption just mentioned, the dual nature in the single person of Christ is the occasion for more of Adam's tropical treatment:

O Maria, redemptoris
Creatura, creatoris
  Genetrix magnifica.

These examples do not quite invoke punning, but Adam is not reluctant to exploit puns when the occasion presents itself. In the sort of contexts with which Adam is concerned, puns are used, as the English metaphysicals and others were later to use them, for serious effects - that is, puns are used to another purpose than that of giving a *prima facie* startling appearance to essentially drab fact. Puns are used where semantic coincidence penetrates to startling relations in the real order of things. Among seventeenth-century 'metaphysicals', for instance, Donne was to write 'A Hymne to God the Father' in this vein:

Wilt thou forgive that sinne which I did shunne
  A yeare, or two; but wallowed in, a score?
    When that hose done, thou hast not done,
      For I have more.[17]

He rings the changes on his own name in disconcerting seriousness, as he had earlier in a wry little tour de force when his marriage seemed to be heading for disaster: 'John Donne - Ann Donne - Undone.'[18] In both cases the similarity of *Donne* and *done* is more than merely vocal. Donne is facing the finality and irrevocability of human action as embodied in himself. Donne is really the kind of being to whom the word *done* can be applied. His name is very relevant: it concurs, by chance indeed but none the less really, in the expression of a truth.

Similarly, Adam of St Victor writes in a sequence in honor of the Blessed Virgin:

Jesus, verbum summi patris,
Serva servos tuae matris,
Solve reos, salva gratis.[19]

Here again phonetic similarities do more than produce an illusory and quickly spent flutter of interest. *Serva* (save, rescue, deliver) and *servos* (slaves, servants) do more than resemble one another phonetically. The notions themselves which they represent are curiously intertwined in the Christian economy, where Christ the Savior is the Master but becomes the servant in order to save His servants.[20] *Solve* (untie) and *salva* (save, redeem - connected with *salvere*=to be in good health) are likewise concepts woven together in the Christian theology of redemption, where Christ's word as Savior is to loose the bonds of sin.

This poetry would of course have its own special predilection for metaphor, and in his use of this piece of equipment Adam shows industry enough. With the love for

symbolic interpretation inculcated by mediaeval preaching and animadversions on Scripture,[21] Adam ransacks the Old Testament for figures to exhibit the mysteries of Christianity under various aspects. Thus an Easter sequence of his explains the Resurrection as the new leaven, the despoiling of the Egyptians, the liberation of the Hebrew youths from the fiery furnace, of the Hebrews from the 'mud, bricks, and straw' of Egypt, the delivery of Joseph from the cistern, vengeance on those who taunted the bald Eliseus, Samson's victory at Rameth-Lechi and his carrying off the city gates from Gaza, and very many other things besides.[22]

From this welter of metaphor to the elaboration of an individual metaphor into an 'allegory' after the manner of the later metaphysicals, the step is not far to take, and Adam takes it. Thus we find one of his Christmas sequences comparing Christ to a nut:

Nux est Christus: *cortex* nucis
Circa carnem poena crucis,
  Testa corpus osseum,
Carne texta deitas
Et Christi suavitas
  Signatur per *nucleum*.[23]

These are only samples of Adam's techniques. Instances of the sort here discussed can be multiplied out of his works almost indefinitely. It is noteworthy. However, that most of his conceits are elaborated on distinctively Christian and dogmatic themes (the significance of this will be discussed later) - but not always. Sometimes the same techniques occur in connection with matters not directly dogmatic at all. For example, in a sequence commemorating the reception of the relics of St Victor of Marseilles, he develops a conceit on the theme of the general jubilation:

Nostri cordis organum,
Nostrae carnis tympanum
  A se dissidentia
Harmonia temperet
Et sibi confoederet
  Pari consonantia. [24]

III

Perhaps the most familiar instance of wit in St Thomas Aquinas' poetry is a couplet in the vesper hymn *Pange Lingua* written for the office of Corpus Christi, where it still occurs in the Roman breviary:

Verbum carno panem verum
Verbo carnem efficit.[25]

This multi-dimensional conceit is a variant of one of the paradoxes consequent upon the Incarnation of the Word of God, and in availing himself of it, Thomas is tapping a source which lies at the innermost heart of Christian doctrine.

Thomas is here concerned with the fact that it was not God the Father nor God the Holy Spirit, but the Second Person, God the Word, Who became flesh, and that this same Word, when He wishes to convert bread into His flesh uses words as the instruments for His action. This is a coincidence startling enough and too good to be missed, the more so because the use of words in connection with its sacramental ritual was plainly distinctive of the New Law inaugurated after the Word had entered the material world as man: the Paschal Lamb which in the Old Law prefigured the Eucharistic sacrifice, had, like most other 'sacraments' of the Old Law, no special verbal formula connected with it.[26] It is difficult to regard all this as mere coincidence. It teases the theologian for some explanation: examine it, keep turning it over in your mind, and you may find in it some clue to God's plan of things.

This is the same theology of the Word which has proved a limitless source of conceits not only for mediaeval theologians but also for patristic rhetoricians, for seventeenth-century Englishmen, and for contemporary poets interested in the metaphysical tradition. St Thomas is moving over ground to which wit poetry has never relinquished its claim. One conceit, for instance, is to be found in all the three groups of writers just mentioned. St Augustine uses in a sermon the paradox of the *Verbum infans*, Who was not only the infant Word, the child Jesus, but, to take the Latin *infans* in its full etymological force, the unspeaking Word.[27] A strange and startling paradox, but an unmistakable dogmatic fact, that the Word of God initiates His personal mission among men in the inarticulate role of a child. The identical paradox is remarked later by Lancelot Andrewes in a sermon on the Incarnation: 'What, *Verbum infans*, the Word of an infant? The Word, and not to be able to speak a word.'[28] And from Andrewes' world, that of the English 'metaphysicals', the same conceit makes its way into T.S. Eliot's *Gerontion*.[29]

Corruptions of the text had until recently obscured the fact that in his hymn commonly known as *Adoro Te Devote* Thomas Aquinas is preoccupied with the identical notion of the concealed and silent Word. As proposed in the opening line, the theme of this hymn is the hidden *Truth* ('*Adoro deuote - latens ueritas-*') not the hidden divinity (*latens deitas*)[30] of the more familiar reading, in which, no doubt, missing the form of Thomas' thought and feeling, someone has piously watered down his concept to a different one admitting of a more indiscriminate sort of response.

Thomas goes on in the same hymn to develop another conceit from the theology of the Word:

Credo quicquid dixit dei filius:
Nichil ueritatis uerbo uerius.[31]

Here he draws on the analogy between the intellectual generation of the Son or Word by the Father and the generation of the Son's own human knowledge in his human intellect, together with its manifestation by His human voice. More than this, the implications of the connection between *verum* (the true) and *Verbum* (the Word or Truth of God) are exploited to the full as the similarity of sound between the two words is brought out in the peremptory verse pattern. For the truth of things derives properly and primarily from their being known to God when He knows Himself by His divine Intellect: and in this act of knowing, the Father or First Person generates the Second Person, the Son or Logos, Who *is* the term of the divine knowledge.

These are capital passages. They illustrate how word-play can in the same context both grow directly out of distinctively Christian doctrine and be put to effective literary use. It is a mistaken notion of a past age disowned by current criticism to think that word-play must involve only abstract notions and must be deficient in emotional drive. As a matter of fact, all sorts of psychological and even physiological activities can be implicated in the development of a witty context, particularly when it exhibits the rich organization in evidence here.

We have here in St Thomas an excellent example of what is often found in the English renaissance writers, to take them again as a useful term of comparison: in connection with the manipulation of thought on an abstract plane, and running up to this plane and down from it, operations on a physiological, muscular level which engage the whole human organism in relevant perceptions and feelings. The repetitions of the *verum* and its cognates in these passages, reinforced with *verbum* (*verbo*), dramatizes the insistence of truth by suggesting a reiterated 'True . . . true . . . true!' Truth is inexorable. It keeps coming back, pounding itself not only into the intellect but into the nervous system: 'True . . . true . . . true.' To a sensibility on the *qui vive* for ever new connections and associations, such effects will not be lost.

This is the kind of psychological effect, operating upon and moving back and forth over various levels of awareness, in which renaissance wit was later to deal. We recall Thomas More's 'Yet for as much as if no man should dooe it, but he that might sufficiently dooe it, no man should dooe it: and better it wer to be vnsufficiently done, then vtterly undone.'[32] The repetition builds up considerable physiological pressure, inducing the physical sense that action is imminent and urgent, and thereby conveying on a lower, concrete level the very point More's though is making on the rational plane: 'Do . . . do . . . do!' Moreover, spaced irregularly here as in the *Adoro Te Devote* passage, the beat from the iteration keeps the auditor a little on edge. In *Macbeth* Shakespeare employs the same device:

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly.[33]

If, as has been pointed out above, word-play can be more than mere phonetic tinkering and become a fertile ground for intellectual activity when the crisscross of sound represents a genuine complexity of real relations, so, as passages such as these last show, play with words can also gain additional richness by moving off to other planes besides that of abstraction, gaining for itself further dimensions as it sets in motion forces at other levels.

Despite the small bulk of Thomas' poetry we have, there is in it no dearth of examples of this same poetic word-play. The *Pange Lingua* cited from above, has in its first stanza:

Sanguinisque pretiosi
Quem in mundi pretium.

Here two words of the same derivation - the former in the sense of precious, the latter, with a slightly different turn, in the sense of *price* or *ransom* - are being used as foils against one another. The hymn continues:

Fructus ventris generosi
Rex effudit gentium.

Generosi carries its more original meaning of *noble by birth* as well as the later notion of generous or lavish, and careful reading of the present selection in context shows that the root meaning of the cognate *generare* (to beget) is being played upon so that the word *gentium*, another cognate, is made to ring several changes at once: For instance, the root meaning inherent in *gens* is brought to the fore, and we are reminded that the *gentes* or Gentiles are born also in Christ, now the *Rex gentium* as well as the *Rex Judaeorum* of John 29.19.

To say that poetry such as this moved through the minds of its readers or hearers in this elaborate array is not to say that all these details were to be apprehended in full consciousness and in all their minuteness. But there they were. And the medieval affection for etymologies, real or fanciful, certainly made a great mass of such detail quite assimilable, both in the case of passages such as the last two and in the case of the *verbum-verbo-verum* motif.

So, again in the case of the *Lauda Sion* sequence, which offers further evidence of the sophistication of Thomas' wit:

In hac mensa novi regis,
Novum pascha novae legis
  Phase vetus terminat.[34]

The phase is a Vulgate form from the same Hebrew word as *pascha* - the *passage* or *passing*.[35] On this table of the new King (we recall the association of the old monarch of Egypt with the Pasch), the new Pasch (passage, passing) of the New Law - the Sacrifice of Calvary prefaced by the Last Supper, but which sacrifice Christ, and ultimately His Church with Him, passes from this world to His Father - marks the passing of the old passing. The hymn continues

A sumente non concisus
. . .
Sumit unus, sumunt mille,
Quantum isti, tantum ille,
Nec sumptis consumitur.

In this stanza *sumere* and its cognates are used five times; in the next the root crops out in three more places:

Sumunt boni, sumunt mali,
. . .
Mors est malis, vita bonis;
Vide, paris sumptionis
  Quam sit dispar exitus.

The various meanings of the root *sumo* enrich these passages with the interplay of various concepts: to take, to lay hold of, to take for use, to put on, to begin, to assert or

maintain - with which latter meaning is connected that of *sumptio* as the premise of a syllogism.

Paradox continues on through the seventh to the tenth stanzas of the same hymn, and many other examples of conceit can be found in St Thomas. Like Adam of St Victor, he saw the life of his Master as beginning with paradox,

Verbum supernum prodiens
Nec patris linquens dexteram,

and ending with paradox, as the Word, Who goes forth without leaving Him wherein He resides, finds the whole of life concentrated in death:

Ad opus suum exiens
Venit ad vitae vesperam.[36]

IV

Comparing poetry of the sort just examined with what one finds in the *Dies Irae* and the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, one soon becomes aware that the textures of the two sorts of work are quite different. The *Dies Irae* and the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* both came into being within a distinctive current of mediaeval piety which may, for want of a more definitive characterization, be designated as the Franciscan school - both hymns are, as a matter of fact, attributed to Franciscans - although the school includes many non-Franciscan representations, running back, as it does, to Bernard of Clairvaux and down into the renaissance *Following of Christ*. This school, whose piety is generally described as affective, characteristically finds the source of its rhetoric in the commonplaces of ordinary life - the love of son for mother, of mother for child, of brother for brother, St Francis of Assisi's love of animals - encouraging the effort to transfer these or similar emotions to higher and nobler objects. This kind of piety seldom turns to theological elucidation in the effort to grow by a fuller and deeper explication of divine Reality. In reference to Christ, such piety concentrates on His human nature, which provides it with a kind of bridge over which it can transfer to His Person responses, principally affective, with which it is familiar from elsewhere.[37]

The existence of a Bonaventure shows that this school is not entirely averse to theological explanation; still, in fostering piety, far more readily than it takes to its theologians' findings, it takes to the conscription of popular notions and fashions which happen to be at hand. It loves to contemplate Christ not uttering mysteries by speaking of fish and sheep to His fishermen and shepherd friends. The most characteristic notes of the *Dies Irae* and the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, the anguish and plangent tenderness which they feature, is intimately connected with this tendency of the Franciscan school to draw upon popular themes. For anguish and plangency, dealing as they do in elemental and, so long as they last, quite enthralling emotions, are always popular enough responses, and their appeal was not diminished by the courtly love tradition of medieval society.38 Just as St Francis could effectively sublimate a concept from the romancers by developing the notion of a *Lady* Poverty, so here the writers avail themselves of feelings of the cort focused in Chaucer's 'loveres maladye of hereos' and displayed in his *Troilus and Criseyde* or in Boccaccio's *Filostrato* or in scores of other places. No need for striking juxtaposition, for the stimulus of insights freshly arrived at,

establishing intricate connections between realities apprehended in all sorts of ways and at all sorts of levels simultaneously - no need for wit in any form. Here the business is that of calling up familiar blocks of feeling and transferring them to a higher place. Simply exclamation and conspicuous parallelism will do:

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
  Mater unigeniti!

Quae maerebat et dolebat
Et tremebat, dum videbat
  Nati poenas incliti.[39]

Or simple narration or panoramic display in a loose scriptural setting:

Dies irae, dies illa
Solvet saeclum in favilla
Teste David cum sibylla.
. . .
Tuba mirum sparget sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.[40]

The air of 'mystery' here may readily prove deceptive. The term suggests Adam's and Thomas' theological interests, yet the 'mystery' here is quite different from theological mystery. The air of 'mystery' which fills the *Dies Irae* or the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* is derived not so much from the dogmatic content of revelation, from the mind's being in contact with truths which it finds too massive for its grasp, as from the somewhat hypnotic repetitiousness and parallelism commonly available for popular incantations. It is the 'mystery' of the eerie, like that in the witches' charms in *Macbeth*:

Round about the cauldron got:
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights hast thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i'the charmed pot.
Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.[41]

This weird *diablerie*, which here also in Shakespeare is seen, interestingly enough, to assimilate itself readily to themes involving the sweep of time (thirty-one days), burning, and so on, is in the *Dies Irae* and the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* used indeed legitimately enough and to good purpose. It is quite effectively diverted from its magical uses to help convey the portentous air inseparable from the Last Judgment and Crucifixion themes. But once again the effect is not got out of Christian teaching; rather, effects at hand from elsewhere are detached and applied - in so far as possible in an intensified form - to the Christian ethos.

Generally speaking, the poetry of this other tradition is simply uninterested in the complexity of the Adamic-Thomistic style. In the course of a comparison made in a recent study vindicating Aquinas' claim to the authorship of the *Adoro Te Devote*,[42] one sees what happens to the close compression of Thomistic conceit in the hands of a typical representative of the Franciscan school, Jacopone da Todi. Thomas had written:

Visus, gustus, tactus in te fallitur;
Sed solus auditus tute creditur. -
Credo quicquid dixit dei filius:
Nichil ueritatis uerbo uerius.[43]

In a poem echoing this passage out of Thomas, Jacopone quickly short-circuits Thomas' high-tension conceit and carries through only the thought that one sense opposes the other four:

Li quattro sensi dicono:
Questo si è vero pane.
Solo audito resistelo
Ciascun de lor fuor remane,
So'eueste[44] uisibil forme
Cristo occultato ce stane;
Cusì a l'alma se dàne
En questa misteriata.

The theology of the Logos is not entered into. It would involve the poem in a head-on approach to one of the 'mysteries' of Christianity, and such a thing is simply not desired here. The mysteries of Christianity are indeed accepted in this tradition: indeed, the last line here makes the note of mystery explicit. Nevertheless, it is symptomatic that this line represents no more than a loose gesture toward the mysteries as such. Precisely as mysteries, the teachings of Christianity do not have great poetic interest.

V

In Adam and Thomas, however, they do. And this fact has a definite bearing on the predilection for wit in the type of poetry which Adam and Thomas write. In this poetry interest in word-play and witty conceit go hand-in-hand with preoccupation with genuinely distinctive 'mysteries' of Christianity. Moreover, the juncture is not accidental: here conceits are simply a *normal means* of dealing with the mysteries of Christianity, the distinctively Christian teachings, as well as a means of achieving a successful poetic texture. How this is so will, I trust, be demonstrated in the following pages.

Word-play in hymnody was, to be sure, not first employed in the strongly theological milieu of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Throughout the medieval hymnographers from the earliest times there is ample evidence of word-play and witty conceit,[45] and such things, in turn, must have been caught up from classical Latinity at many of the manifold points of contact - a strong current out of the rhetoricians is maintained through the constant use of St Augustine - and must also have emerged or received stimulation from all sorts of vernacular sources. But despite its common occurrence much earlier, this wit in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has a special connection

with the great theological activity of the time. The connection becomes explicit in the writings of St Thomas Aquinas.

When he draws the line of demarcation between what Christian teaching has in common with any well-reasoned-out religion ('natural' religion) which man has arrived at or might arrive at and what it has as distinctively its own, Thomas makes the significant observation that the *distinctively Christian element creates a tension in linguistic expression* and that *precisely this tension establishes a point of similarity* with poetry.

This observation turns up as Thomas discusses the fact that metaphor, which seems to be a device distinctive of poetry and foreign to the physical and mathematical sciences and to metaphysics and logic, turns up again and again in Christian theology. This fact would not have concerned Thomas had he been thinking of theology as some sort of whimsical expression on religious themes - as random, if impressive, talk. But he was concerned with a theology maintained as a strict science, and the question his discussion broaches is whether theology, if it is a strict science, can be justified in its employment of metaphor. He finds that it can:

> The science of poetry is about things which because of their deficiency of truth cannot be laid hold of by the reason. Hence the reason has to be drawn off to the side by means of certain comparisons. But then, theology is about things which lie beyond reason. Thus the symbolic method is common to both sciences, since neither is of itself accommodated [to the human reason].[46]

For Thomas, Christian theology and poetry are indeed not the same thing, but lie at opposite poles of human knowledge. However, the very fact that they are opposite extremes gives them something of a common relation to that which lies between them: they both operate on the periphery of human intellection. A poem dips below the range of the human process of understanding-by-reason as the subject of theology sweeps above it.

The 'deficiency of truth' in a poem is to be traced to the peculiar kind of existence which a poem exercises, to its inability to survive the abstraction which is the peculiar condition *sine qua non* of human understanding.

Although truth is founded on the real, is in touch with the real, we can get into intellectual contact with reality only by the peculiar operation known as abstraction. Abstraction - for all the weakness and inadequacy of the process itself - is necessary both because of the kind of being man is, and, conversely, because of the kind of being with which he is in immediate contact: being which includes in itself matter. The fact is that an individual existent of the sort we encounter, an individual whose being is grounded in matter, cannot in terms of its own being alone, make an understanding of itself available to the one looking at it or feeling it. This is simply a matter of observation. For understanding, which comes with science, we need to examine a multiplicity of individuals, or at least of individual instances.[47] Only when we have experience of a number of other things and manage to put together various charts and tables and laws or principles, all of them abstractions, can we hope to possess intellectually, to understand (*intelligere*) the very existents about us here and now.

St Thomas was struck by the somewhat eerie fact that nothing man comes across explains itself, that nothing he encounters is self-explanatory: always everything depends on something *else* for its own intelligibility. Although an object may be bright as day, right in front of you, it will not yield understanding unless you can keep various abstractions - the charts or tables or laws or principles, which are not the thing itself - somehow in view. A child does not look at a dog and understand. He looks at a dog and is puzzled. He blurts out a string of questions. The child who, hypothetically, would once come across a dog and never anything else, not even, let us say, another dog - on simply having one dog register once on him - could never hope to understand the dog. And yet, there the dog is. A being with an intellect is in contact with him. But the fact remains that the dog, unabated by other things, is intellectually opaque. He does not make sense, alone. He can be brought around to making sense only by our working with *other* things. So we must step back for the moment, apply instruments, view this being which impinges so immediately on our senses through something is not only other than this being itself but derived from observations involving many other beings besides this being itself: through a science, such as biology; that is to say, through a structure of abstractions. In the end, we come to know the dog, all right, for it is items such as this dog, that dog, which in the last analysis we want to understand, since we want to understand not abstract problems, but the world and what is in it. Yet we come to understand that dog only when we have got far enough off from him to see him in perspective, to view him at a distance through the findings of a science.

It is a matter of record that this is the kind of understanding of things men have. Regarding the chances for a science of poetry in a setting such as this, St Thomas, never too sanguine about human intellectual prowess, is clearly aware that there are going to be difficulties.[48] He is aware of the unsatisfactory and inconclusive, not to say distressing, nature of discussion about any poem. Because of its peculiar insistence on remaining concreted within the act of apprehension itself, a poem resists the very abstraction by which we would understand it. Abstraction, in one way or another, destroys it, dissolves it away. So we must content ourselves largely with simply apprehending the poem by reading or hearing it read, and as for any strict understanding of a poem, we must content ourselves with thinking and talking *around* it. Thomas does not put it in exactly the same words, but when he speaks of its 'deficiency of truth', he is concerned with the same thing about a poem which prompts Archibald MacLeish to observe that 'A poem should not mean/ But be'.[49]

Yet it would be inaccurate to say that we have no understanding at all of poetry. We do find ourselves able to think about it, which means that somehow or other our understanding is concerned with it. What we are doing is approaching it by a kind of indirection - this fact is attested to by the constant resort to metaphor which the most rigorous discussion of poetry seems inexorably to demand. A poem seems unable to forego this minimum of concretion even in being discussed. And in so far as it will not submit fully to abstraction but must retain the concretion of metaphor, it escapes reason. Not that it is against reason, antirational. Reason is an imperfect way of getting at a thing: it implies a special approach, it produces understanding only under certain conditions, and those things which are not amenable to these conditions simply escape it. These special things would not be demanded by the intellects of purely spiritual beings, the angelic spirits and God, in whom understanding is generated simply by the direct contact with the spiritual objects which are the things they find themselves immediately facing (for the Divinity this is primarily His own Being, in Whose all-

pervasive light created reality, too, is pierced through intellectually).[50] This sort of intellect understands things without resort to abstractions: but with this sort of intellect man is not gifted. He has only a rational or reasoning sort of intelligence. He understands the things that surround him only at the end of a reasoning process, which is not simply looking at things, an intellectual gaze, but an intellectual journey, a spinning out of abstractions. Only at the end of such a journey does the light of understanding come, after one has plotted out the terrain with little markers, worked his way carefully through a lay-out of abstractions.

Hence poetry really demands too much of the reason in its insistence both that it be understood and that it be understood somehow with resort to abstractions. From this fact arises the strain, which Thomas supposes as a matter of common observation, the state of tension in which poetry leaves reason. Plato had some warrant, after, all for barring poets from his republic: they do violence to and unsettle the reason on which his political order was to have been based.

In this connection Thomas say nothing specifically about the use of conceit. But the implications of his view are plain. If poetry implies a sort of rational derangement, an unmanageableness, a non-integration on the rational level in the face of a unity perceptible in other ways (the unity of impression, the unity of perception in a poem), *the superlative derangement inherent in the conceit*, which by operating through devices such as paradox maintains a sense of order in disorder and disorder in order, *stands as a kind of paragon of procedure in a poetic economy*.

Thomas' explanation of the use of metaphor in theology moves along quite another, but a similar line. In the science of theology based on Christian revelation, as well as in the science of poetry, the intellect must in a way come upon its objects by a kind of flank movement. It grasps it only by the periphery. The difficulty here, however, is that the human intellect is in contact with something too massive for it, whereas in the case of poetry the object was too fragile for it.

St Thomas clearly points out that this difficulty is especially inherent in distinctively Christian theology. The difficulty he envisions is not one which arises when reason has to do simply with the One True God under those aspects which many non-Christians acknowledge. To be sure, to come to any knowledge of God at all demands some elementary intellectual activity, though it involves no difficulties that the ordinary, unhandicapped mind cannot readily surmount (here, as everywhere else, to arrive at a certain knowledge and to be able to recount in scientific detail *how* one arrived at it are two different things). Moreover, what knowledge of God we come to by the natural works of our intellect will not be proper but analogous knowledge, and in this sense no living man can form for himself a concept of God as He really is. Yet the difficulty with which Thomas is concerned is one which the Jew or the Mohammedan will not encounter, although they submit to the same God as the Christians do. 'There are some truths concerning God', St Thomas says, 'which exceed all power of the human reason, as the truth that God is three as well as one. And there are some truths to which even natural reason may attain, as the truth that God exists, that God is one, and other truths of this sort'.[51] This second troupe of truths any number of men may have in common with the Christian. But truths in the first group, the Trinity and the Incarnation (which is to be understood in function of the Trinity, since it is the Second Person of the Trinity Who became incarnate), together with the dispensation of Providence for the world in

terms of these truths,[52] are had only by the special divine revelation on which Christianity is founded. Truths in the first group are the 'mysteries' of Christianity, truths with which the unaided reason cannot establish contact, which man would be quite justified in rejecting for want of evidence did he not have them on the word of God Himself. Although all the evidence proposed against these truths turns out to be inconclusive or even a hoax[53] - evidence which is in the last analysis beside the point - nevertheless the truths really cannot be explained on rational grounds: although one cannot show that they are false, one cannot show *how* they can be true.[54]

The reason is that these truths are not of a piece with the being with which man is surrounded. The same created things which give evidence of God's existence, His uniqueness, His eternity, and so on, provide no unequivocal evidence of the Trinity. The Trinity is a secret of the Godhead, too interior and peculiar to the divine life to leave betraying traces upon God's operations *ad extra*, so that the various 'trinities' which men attempt to demonstrate from reason in the Godhead do not fit the Christian Trinity of Persons at all. And the other Christian mysteries are all involved in this one of the Trinity, for only in the Trinity is their full expression to be found.

But if these truths in the first group, such as the Trinity, are to be revealed to man by the oral teaching even of Christ Himself, and if they are to continue to be taught, they must be put into language, the terms of which are of a piece with the being with which man is surrounded, since these terms are derived from the created material being which man knows. Charged with the task of expressing something for which they have no natural aptitude, these terms will be taxed beyond their natural powers. They will be aligned in strange and unaccountable ways. The concepts and consequently the language will be in a state of tension.

This tension does not mean that in a conceptual formulation of any one or of all the mysteries of Christianity a contradiction is involved. There is, for instance, no real contradiction in an accurate enunciation of the doctrine of the Trinity, such as, for example, 'In God there are three subsisting Relations'. Considering the content with which the terms in such statements are charged, one finds that by virtue of this content, drawn from the natural world, the terms do not positively repel one another.

But they do tend to drop apart simply from want of anything to endorse cohesion. Taking the terms with all the content one can give them and all the evidence one can bring from the natural world relevant to such content, one cannot show that the doctrine contained in such statements must of itself be so nor even how it might be so. In the light of natural reason, the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be seen to be urgent at all.

This remains true even though the fact that this truth has been revealed by God can be established quite rationally on the basis of intransigent historical facts as well as on the basis of contemporary evidence such as miracles, which are indeed unpredictable events but matters of simple fact, often entirely verifiable, still occurring in the Church and attesting to the disinterested mind the Church's claim to the possession of a divine revelation. For the human mind, even when brought by inescapable evidence to the conclusion *that* a revelation has been made by God, still needs an altogether special gift from God, an enlargement of its natural powers, if it is to lay hold of the *content* of this revelation, concerned, as it is, with supernatural truth - that is, if it is to accept, to assent to, this revelation in a salutary way.

This gift from God, which is the gift called Christian faith, comes into play in every Christian and sets the mind to a task beyond itself. It thereby established the mind of the believer in a lifelong state of real tension. An acute awareness of the presence of this tension brought Thomas to examine in terms of a detailed study of human intellection the condition of mind consequent upon Christian belief.[55] Since this condition is radical to the entire Christian economy and of extreme importance to an understanding of the interaction of mediaeval theology with mediaeval poetry, Thomas' study is of primary importance and worth inspection for our present purposes, at least as a report by an intelligent believer upon his own state of mind.

Examining the nature of the Christian mysteries, Thomas finds that the basic reason for the need of a special gift from God, if the intellect is to lay hold of these mysteries, is the fact that although the terms in which the mysteries are stated are indeed joined to one another by predication in a formulation of the mysteries - *one numerical Nature* is joined with *three Persons* - this connection cannot derive from the things from which the terms themselves derive. When such a condition exists, the intellect is necessarily in a distressing state.

Thomas recognizes that understanding is the goal of all intellectual activity, and understanding is radically intellectual vision or intuition. This means that not only concept but all the connections we make of concepts must be validated by being discerned in the material reality about us. It is not without significance that when they understand, men commonly and without effort, say simply, 'I see'. To understand is not to reason or to consider or weigh. Reasoning is usually the way to arrive at understanding. But understanding is to look, to view. In the psychology and theology of Thomas, the Kantian distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge holds up no better than it has in modern physics.

Unlike most mediaeval thinkers, Thomas was a rigid experimentalist: his observation was that everything man employs in understanding is found out, discovered, observed, seen in things round about man by a process, usually far less deliberate and calculating, but essentially the very same as that of a modern research scientist in his laboratory - a process of collecting evidence. Even the principle of contradiction does not simply turn up in the mind. It is the product of experience. Like everything else, it, too, is *found out*.[56] Once an individual has a minimum of experience, he sees it as work in things.

Of the truths which man finds out, by no means all are immediately understandable, and some are more readily understandable than others. To find out the fact that the angles of a triangle add up to one straight angle is not to *understand* the fact. Once come upon, such a fact is found to be not entirely permeable to the vision of the intellect: the intellect sees the need of further inspection, further explanation. It is faced with a thing which does not admit of immediate intuition: such a thing must be worked over, reduced to something clearly visible.

Man does discover some such clearly visible things, although unfortunately they are not the material substances with which he is surrounded. They are not individual wholes. They are abstract principles - called principles or points of departure because they are the points of origin of understanding - such things, for instance, as the principle of contradiction. Once come upon, this principle is immediately and totally permeable to the intellect. It is so clear, indeed, that when one states it, one seems to be saying almost

nothing: the principle is almost completely merged with the intellect itself.[57] But this is the way real understanding should be, after all: knowing is identification of the mind with its object.

Man's intellection may be described as thin because it is only principles like these and not the real individual existent material wholes with which he is surrounded that are in *themselves* permeable to his mind. Individual spiritual existents - an angelic spirit, for instance - would be immediately permeable to the intellect were the intellect put in contact with them. A purely spiritual substance would be a self-evident substance, an object for intellection which would be lucid without being thin at all. But it is material things that we have direct contact with, and they are not such. One need only have experience of them to appreciate that they are not self-evident, *selbstverständlich*. They are evident, lucid, in the light of principles derived from them. These principles are the only sort of thing we encounter which are *selbstverständlich.* They are self-evident not in the sense that they turn up in the intellect automatically but in the sense that they are lucid, that when the intellect finds them out it penetrates immediately to their innermost core. It sees all at once everything there is in them.[58] There is nothing left to be explained in terms of something else.

Now understanding being vision, it must be carried on in function of things which are immediately and totally visible, lucid. Therefore to understand material things is to find in them such principles, to discover the area in them in which such principles are located, for once the intellect can hit on such a principle, it will pierce deeply into the being it is trying to understand. The principle, being permeable to the intellect, will admit the intellect to the core of the being itself.

This illustrates what happens when one comes to understand, for example, the fact that the angles of a triangle add up to one straight angle. This fact itself is not immediately permeable to the intellect: it is not evident *in itself*. But there is the mathematical principle that the whole is greater than any one of its parts, and another that the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts, and so on. These are self-evident, intellectually lucid truths discernible in things: constructing a mathematical figure in the imagination as one has learned to do from experience and memory[59] - a triangle, for instance, divided into parts - by inspection of the phantasm one simply sees standing out there the principle that the whole is greater than its parts. Equipped with principles such as these - how many such principles there are we can transmit in the present discussion - one is prepared to *understand* the fact that the angles of a triangle add up to one straight angle. One demonstrates the fact in the light of such principles. Thus (complete) demonstration is a process of disclosing the relation of a truth with self-evident principles. One studies the angles in a triangle in such a way as to see the self-evident principles in this fact. Once they are seen here, we say we understand.

Here one can begin to appreciate the difficulty inherent in Christian faith. In the case of mathematics the principles which make the fact understandable come from the same material source as the fact itself. (The same is true of other sciences which are the ways to understanding.) One sees the principle that the whole is greater than its parts, etc., by inspecting the phantasm in the imagination. That is, to find the principles one inspects the same things which one had inspected to gather the notions in the truth one is trying to explain: the notions of triangle, angle, straight angle, and so on. The notions and the principles are intimately joined, destined for one another, flesh of one another's flesh

and bone of one another's bone, derived from the same source, complements, components of the same realities.

Now any truth which the human intellect naturally possesses or contains, the intellect lays claim to because of the fact that the truth is reducible in one way or another to principles immediately self-evident. A truth is naturally in the intellect, is naturally intellectually possessed, in so far as it is faced toward such principles, in so far as within it self-evident principles are at least implicitly grasped. These form the points at which the intellect as intellect secures purchase on its object, the points at which the wider *knowledge*, which in man includes sense cognition and various mixtures of sense and intellectual cognition, becomes specifically intellection, the points at which intellectual penetration begins.

But the truths of faith, the mysteries as such, as these present themselves to the intellect, are not in themselves faced toward such principles. Here the notions in the truth which offers itself to the mind derive indeed from the material world: *person, one, three, nature*, and so on. But as for the truth itself *In the one divine Nature there are three divine Persons*, alas! there is no principle from the material world to which this truth is reducible, which gives the intellect any purchase on it at all. Even the principle of contradiction, or any other similar principle, such as the principle of identity, is not universally true. It is only to say that it is irrelevant to an understanding of the Trinity (since the principle itself, like all reality, has its source in God, and since, moreover, it can be used to show that the Trinity has been revealed by God and thus indirectly that the Trinity must be true), but irrelevant in the sense that it does not make the Trinity any more permeable by, available to the human intellect. That is, although the principle of contradiction will not work to show that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be or is not true, still neither will it make evident from intrinsic non-authoritarian reasons that the doctrine of the Trinity is true. Here one is in the realm of absolute truth, put forth in its own immediacy and interiority, and the possibility of reasoning to it vanishes. There is nothing to which it can be reduced, nothing that could make it more luminous, for it is luminosity itself. This truth must be seen in itself or it will not be seen at all. Beside it, all things are dim - including the principle of contradiction and every other principle. Not in any principle at all, nor in any reasoning process, but 'in *lumine tuo*', says the Psalmist, 'videbimus lumen'.[60]

During this life, while there is no vision of the Blessed Trinity, assent to the truths of faith therefore means that the intellect is called upon to grasp a truth not constituted like those it is naturally fitted to grasp. Natural truths are so constructed that they not only admit of, but point to validation in the same matter as that from which are drawn the concepts which enter into them. This construction is what adapts them to the human intellect. The mysteries of faith are otherwise. In them the mind starts indeed from material reality in the sense that it derives from material things the concepts by which it grasps the mysteries. But here its movement is circular, as it is in natural cognition, where the intellect returns to material things for completion. It is centrifugal. And this for human intellection is violent movement. Thus as the very heart of the Christian economy there exists a state of tension, of violence, of stress.

In a psychological setting such as this, it is plain that Christian faith is in no sense reducible to a satisfying feeling of confident trust which salves one's uneasiness concerning the outcome of life, nor is it a satisfying culmination of intellectual life, an

intellectual or volitional ultimate. Rather, it is an essentially unsatisfying state, and Thomas attempts no hocus-pocus to convince himself that it is anything else.

Faith serves a purpose in Christianity precisely because man has no natural equipment to see supernatural truth and will not be given this equipment until after death. If during this life man is to have any intellectual contact at all with the supernatural, it will have to be an imperfect intellectual contact. Faith makes possible precisely this intellectual contact which does not progress beyond the imperfect stage. Faith makes it possible for supernatural truth to establish a beachhead, and only a beachhead, in the mind.

The state of mind induced by belief or faith is a normal enough phenomenon of human life. Belief forms a common principle of activity, and an intellectual principle at that, for what a man believes forms ground for intellectual operations and for intellectually direction action. But further, the state of mind resulting from belief or faith is imperfect. It certainly leaves much to be desired. It leaves the mind in one way or another restless and tense. Yet, although it is not an intellectually perfect condition, man must utilize belief often enough, for, to tell the truth, he is not really so thorough-going an intellectual as he sometimes likes to make himself out to be. His intellect cannot always achieve its goal perfectly. It has its limitations, and he has to make up for them by half-measures, by flanking operations.

Belief is one of these operations. Although it is not a direct approach to truth, it is often the only approach available, and it often works so well that it leads ultimately, if deviously and somewhat erratically, to understanding. Anyone with an eye open to the facts knows, for instance, that the child who believes his parents and teachers will do well to believe them, for although, of its nature, understanding does not depend on belief at all but on vision, on intuition, still belief is a very normal, and for practical purposes an indispensable road - or short-cut - to the point from which vision becomes possible. Although understanding and not belief takes the real measure of being, and belief should be checked when understanding is arrived at, one must face the fact that the child who refuses to take anything on faith from his elders will remain at best badly retarded, and most likely a sheer idiot. Indeed, practically speaking, it would be quite impossible psychologically for a child to act in such a way.

Moreover, reliance on faith remains a permanent, if progressively less important, condition of intellectual activity throughout man's life. This fact is no anomaly: belief is imperfect contact with truth, circuitous contact, but that is only to say that here, as elsewhere, man's activity does not achieve its goal in one fell swoop but proceeds by little and little from the less perfect to the more perfect. Even in scientific research work, the first steps are less sure, less definitive than the last.

It is not difficult, therefore, to see why God should utilize belief as a means of introducing into the human mind *in a preliminary fashion* truths which are of themselves beyond its comprehension and for which it will be completely equipped only in a subsequent stage of its development. The divine plan for the supernatural simply avails itself of the natural processes of the human intellect, in which belief is often a preliminary to understanding - the less perfect contact which commonly enough precedes the more perfect.

In its relation to poetic tension, the tension associated with supernatural faith has a particular relevance of its own because it is more acute than that resulting from natural faith. There is accordingly a relevance to wit poetry quite special to Christianity.

But the superlative sentences of the intellectual stress or tension accompanying supernatural faith is not contravened by the absolute certitude which Thomas finds investing the same supernatural Christian faith.[61] Indeed, both the stress or tension and the certitude are traceable to the same conditions.

Although in particular areas of fact or at particular times the human intellect may have to rely on report, on belief, for its contact with natural truth, it is never completely at the mercy of belief for such contact. Precisely because a report is set within the material world where other effects of the truth reported upon are registered and can often be found, natural faith - the belief of one man in the word of another - admits of being superseded in the usual course of natural events. If in an individual case the mind fails to replace faith by science, to carry belief on to a more perfect knowledge, this is solely because of limitations of time and space such as beset all its pursuit of truth.

Of itself, a truth which the mind knows by natural faith admits of being checked. The human mind has open before itself the possibility of perfecting its knowledge by multiplying in one way or another its contacts with a reality. In multiplicity lies its preservative against error. Thus in scientific procedure the mind proceeds by experimentation. In the case of natural belief the mind can multiply its contacts by obtaining separate reports about an event or even, to some extent, by considering the event in terms of the circumstances of the report, that character and motivation of the reporter, and so on. In so far as it does such things it arrives at that certitude which one invalidated report from man can never give, although, at the same time, in so far as it validates the reports which it receives, it ceases to believe and begins to know. But man can do this sort of thing precisely because the truths with which natural faith is concerned occur within the setting of the material cosmos with which he is surrounded and to which he has ready and manifold access. This means, too, that in the last analysis they occur in the setting from which he can induce principles by which to understand them.

By simply occurring within this setting, therefore, the truths which man believes by natural faith on the reports of his fellow men admit of being transmuted from their status of reports into something else: the mind can proceed from central faith to something better, to knowledge and understanding. Although there are some borderline cases in which we cannot decide whether a truth can legitimately be reduced from faith to simple knowledge, just as there are borderline cases in which the scientist cannot determine whether he can infer a general principle, still there are clear cases in which accumulation of evidence leads to the disappearance of faith. One could hardly say, for instance, that an intelligent adult who had never been away from Paris *believed* in the existence of Rome. He knows Rome exists. So the historian knows that Julius Caesar lived, that Christ lived. The informed Christian, who must believe *what* God reveals, God has given a revelation. The only ones who believe such things are those who have not availed themselves of the necessary information at hand to reduce their state of mind from belief to knowledge.

Thus the assents of natural faith come about in an area of reality with which the intellect already has a multiplicity of contacts enabling it to operate so as to verify at least some of the things it believes in. These contacts are what gives the mind its real hold on what it assents to. Not so in the case of supernatural faith. Here the intellect is projected by the very act of faith itself beyond its own natural bounds so that only in the act of faith has it any contact at all with the truth it assents to. There is no possibility of its reaching out under its own power to multiply its contacts with this reality, for the supernatural is precisely that which the finite intellect cannot contact under its own power.

Moreover, the intellect needs certainty here, for it could hardly be said to be assenting to supernatural truth at all if it assented to it as merely probable. For how could such truth be probable? Probability involves the possibility of being referred to something else for verification. And to what could this be referred?

But, according to St Thomas' report, the mind is not so nonplused as all that, for the object of supernatural faith is known on the word of God Himself and is therefore absolutely certain. Here and here alone one has absolute certainty conjoined with belief or faith. This never happens regarding faith in human reports, which, so long as it is sheer faith, without an element of science - introduced by consideration of circumstances, etc. - remains a kind of 'vehement opinion.'[62] Thus the crisis at the center of the Christian economy can be stated as the presence of *a maximum of certitude with a minimum of understanding*. This is a state which exists at the center of Christian life within man's highest and most vital - his intellectual - activity, and which is essentially inescapable and life-long, which no man can hope to put aside for himself, and which will vanish only when, in the next life belief gives way to understanding, when God opens the floodgates and pours Himself without stint into the soul,[63] giving the intellect that understanding - that vision, that intuition - which it is powerless to achieve for itself.

Meanwhile, till this final stage is reached, even taking God's absolutely inerrant word is not seeing the truth, not understanding, and the intellect remains restless; it keeps poking around, inquiring. Indeed, of this inquisitiveness theology is born. But when theology comes into being, it is as an abiding testimony to the tension to which the mind is subject when it accepts any truth on faith, even if this be a faith with supernatural powers trained on a supernatural object. For, although theology is a science, by this strange science the mind can never really free itself of the tension inherent in a life founded on belief. Theology will indeed give the mind something to do concerning its state, bring it to a knowledge of much it did not know before. It will in a way satisfy the restiveness of the mind, but only deviously, by setting the mind to the task of pushing the limits of reason to their uttermost bounds.

But beyond the limits it cannot go. Theology will never *solve* the mysteries of faith all. In the last analysis the only satisfaction the natural mind gets from theology is to be able to say, 'At least *this* isn't a mystery. This is clear. The mystery lies from here to there.' But the distance from here to here remains always infinity.

Thus at the center not only of Thomas' religious life but also of his scientific life, this state of tension existed. And he knew it and consciously adverted to the fact. For deep within the science of theology the mystery remains. The science is founded on a real, but imperfect grasp of its subject. Because of this, because its subject, as a modern

theologian aptly puts Thomas' view, is *incontrôlable*, always half-way out of bounds, theology, like poetry, resorts to metaphor. For in the case of theology, even abstraction is an inadequate means of managing its material. Abstraction is weak here not only by virtue of its inevitable departure from real, individual beings, but also because in this case, despite all its sacrifices of concreteness, in the last analysis it does not eliminate the blind spot at the very center of the puzzle, however brilliant it makes things around the edges.

The very thing which science ordinarily sets out to do by departing from concrete, individual, material, real existents, it has here in the last analysis failed to accomplish in the most urgent sense. Hence the intellect is justified in tacking back again, in seeking through the greater concretion of metaphor to make up for what it has lost through a journey on which reason has taken it without too great success. Of course, metaphor will not be entirely satisfactory either. But at least it is a compensation of a kind. And at this point, the parallel with poetry comes clear. There are great differences, but there is also a parallel. For both poetry and theology, metaphor is a last, and not quite satisfactory, resort.

But it must be noted that this explanation of Christian faith and Christian theology is not a speculative joy ride undertaken as an escape from reality. Nor is it merely a self-consistent explanation which Thomas offers for a fanciful condition in which man might find himself - a pipe dream in the realm of pure theory. It is - a point of moment for our present purpose - an account of what the milieu in which he lived and breathed and wrote his poetry looked like to him. It is St Thomas' considered explanation of what he found to be happening as men lived - that is, believed and acted upon - what was proposed to them by the Church. It sets forth Thomas' findings at the term of the investigation of a concrete set of facts. This is plain from a look at his sources, which are primarily the teachings of the Church as he found them proposed for men in his day, then and there, to believe and to act upon. This must be kept in mind, for the point under observation here is not merely the relationship between wit poetry and St Thomas' speculation, but the relationship between such poetry and the reality from which Thomas' speculation took its rise.

Moreover, Aquinas' report is consonant with a centuries-long string of reports on Christianity from men who were eminently familiar with it. At the very beginning of the Christian dispensation, St Paul had stated that his teaching contained elements of mystery[65] deriving from the fact that it manifested the intimate secrets of the divine economy governing the human race. Accepting the Christian faith he freely stated, involves getting over a 'stumbling block' inseparable from that faith.[66]

Patristic writings come back again and again to the same thing. The theme is persistent in Augustine, in whom the intellectual leap demanded by faith fins expression, not too satisfactorily, in statements such as 'Intellige ut credas, crede ut intelligas'.[67] And in the fourth century St Hilary could write that the mystery of the Trinity was a thing 'beyond the denotative power of speech, beyond the representative power of sense, beyond the conceptual power of the intelligence'.[68]

Through the Middle Ages the same general mind prevails: there is something at the heart of Christian teaching which, while not anti-rational is still somehow trans-rational.[69] The paradox causes the theologians to vacillate in their attempts to formulate

a description of the matter,[70] but Trinitarian explanations such as Abelard's, which sought to prove the Trinity from reason, are condemned as being false to the facts.[71]

In Adam's monastery of St Victor, Richard and Hugh seem to have been a little uncertain in their theological formulations, but Hugh at least was acutely aware that, viewed in terms of the science of logic or natural reason, Christian revelation posited somehow a special condition for the human intellect: once revelation was an historical fact, not one, but 'two representations were proposed to man in which he might see invisible [i.e. divine] things, one of nature and one of grace. The representation [in the order] of nature was the appearance of this world. And the representation [in the order] of grace was the humanity of the Word'.[72]

With Thomas' development of the theorems of the natural and the supernatural to describe the state of affairs, theorems dividing the content of Christian doctrine into areas which could be traversed by reason and areas contiguous to these but out of reason's reach, explanation reached a theologically stable stage.[73] More accurately set forth than earlier explanations, Thomas' analysis makes explicit the condition of the mysteries of Christianity as these lie in the human mind, and in so doing brings out the fact that the impact of Christian teaching on the human being gives rise to a state of mind which not only exhibits certain special affinities for poetry - Thomas is, as has been shown, quite explicit on this point - but which also finds a poetry of 'wit', rather like that signalized later in the English 'metaphysical' poets a natural expression of its tensions.

Moreover, Christian theology, as is illustrated in the case of St Thomas, brings attention to bear on the very condition which gives rise to the relationship between Christian doctrine and poetry, particularly wit poetry, and so increases awareness of the condition, thereby intensifying the effects. It is therefore more than a coincidence that mediaeval Latin religious verse, of which Adam's and Thomas' works are only samples which have scores of counterparts elsewhere, should freely employ witty conceit as a standard poetic device. This fact is intimately connected with the dominance of theological speculation in the milieu in which these men moved.

It is quite true that by no means all of the paradox and metaphorical elaboration found in Adam or Thomas or elsewhere in mediaeval religious poetry is directly concerned with the real mysteries of Christian doctrine. But the liking for conceit, for far-fetched allegorical and even fanciful interpretations, which runs so strongly through patristic writing as a kind of wit and finds its way into mediaeval religious poetry, feeds to satiety on the fact that the whole of the Christian economy is dominated by what may be called with all reverence super-paradox.

For an adequate understanding of mediaeval Latin religious poetry, this fact and the consequent interaction of poetry with theology must be taken into account, for it leads to the depths of some of the richest poetic passages, and it shows that wit poetry is much more integral to the great central forces in mediaeval civilization than has commonly been suspected.

VI

By way of sequel, there remains one question to answer. Both speculatively, from the point of view of its own structure revealed by critical examination, and practically, from the point of view of its impact upon contemporary poetry, the wit poetry of the English renaissance, which has been the wit poetry effecting in great part the current revision of sensibility, has been noted for a kind of insatiable omnivorousness which enables it to devour all sorts of experience in one gulp.[74] It is the polar opposite of poetry which fastidiously sniffs about for something 'poetic' to assimilate. It is strong enough, we are told, to digest all experience, raw if necessary, and make something of it.

This omnivorousness is intimately related to the ability of wit poetry - an ability earlier adverted to - to move simultaneously on the highest levels of abstract speculation and in a relevant fashion on lower levels, too, integrating in one experience the whole complexity which is man.

Not only twentieth-century scholars and critics, but contemporaries of the metaphysicals themselves make a point of this omnivorousness. Thus Abraham Cowley:

In a true piece of *Wit*, all things must be,
  Yet all things there *agree*.
. . . . .
. . . as the *Primitive Forms* of all
. . . . .
In that strange *Mirror of the Deitie*.[75]
This is an inclusive order.

Since the drawing of a parallel of any sort with metaphysical poetry can hardly avoid the question of this characteristic quality of omnivorousness, a few observations should be made concerning its relation to the Latin poetry which this study has considered.

First of all, it may be said with some truth that mediaeval Latin poetry lacks all idiom, that is it largely a hothouse linguistic growth, its contacts with reality artificially insulated. The vocabulary does not bear the same relation as a completely developed working vernacular would to the totality of things out of which mediaeval man was drawing his experience and his concepts. Large areas of fact and feeling were to some extent isolated from Latin: men usually did not cook in it or manage labor in it or swear in it either. In view of these facts, there can be no doubt that in comparison with any writer whose vehicle was mediaeval Latin, the English metaphysicals, using the later vernacular, could effect a more complete juncture with the manifold entering into a concrete experience.

Still, Professor Tatlock's point remains valid and applicable here. If not in the time of Donne and Cowley, certainly in the time of St Thomas, the vernaculars labored under a very real limitation themselves - a limitation the converse of that of Latin. The vernaculars were insulated from a very real phase of life, the intellectual activity at the universities and elsewhere.

It is perhaps not so easy to recreate the entire experience which a Latin poem conveyed in the twelfth century with the adequacy which we can command to approximate an

experience vernacularly recorded at the same time, or, at any rate, certainly in neither the mediaeval vernacular nor the Latin can our judgments ever arrive at the refinements of perception which they can achieve regarding the literature of the present day. Semantic irrelevancies and the vagaries of associations unknown in the originals relentlessly intrude - there is no use for the most devoted scholar to pretend they do not - and facile interpolations of shades of meanings which cohere satisfyingly without being quite true to the original make distortions hard to detect. Yet, allowing for the difficulties in experiencing all that was originally in the work, one suspects, even from an examination of Latin religious poetry alone, that in view of the cleavage of the realm of experience into a vernacular and a Latin sector, the Lain may well be able to hold its own with the vernaculars in terms of the immediacy it was able to convey. Adam of St Victor seems almost as little limited as the English metaphysicals in his sources for analogies.

This much is also true, as the goliardics show: if mediaeval Latin suffered both from lack of the close continuity with certain aspects of everyday life available in the vernaculars and also perhaps from the dissipating effects of several vernaculars pulling, each with its own connotations for Latin words, in various directions at once, nevertheless the very non-committal international character thereby given to Latin supplied the language with its own peculiar setting and became itself a substitute for a vigorous idiom. One might cite a well-known goliardic to bring out the point:

Jam fit magister artium
Qui nescit quotas partium
  De vero fundamento.
Habere nomen appetit,
Rem vero ne curat ne scit,
 Examine contento.

Jam fiunt baccalaurii
Pro munere denarii
  Quamplures idiotae.
In artibus ab aliis
Egregiis scientiis
  Sunt bestiae promotae.[76]

This is grammar Latin, and yet it remains as untranslatable as any vernacular piece ever was. This is not quite the language of Donne or of Shakespeare, turgid with the washings of daily life. Yet the life of a whole continent, in however distilled form, does flow here. We sense the international sophistication of mediaeval civilization, and the very lack of idiom becomes an idiom of itself. We must not forget how this kind of thing flows through such macaronics as the *Boar's Head Carol* to enter into the thorough-going raciness of Jonson or of Herrick's *Hesperides*. Nor how it toughens the lines of Adam's sequences and of Thomas' Eucharistic hymns.

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Other suggested related texts for further reading: Ernst Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*; Julien Benda, *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals*; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His Age*; Ivan Ilich, *In the Vineyard of the Text*, and the writings of Jean Piaget. On knowledge of Hebrew by the Victorines, Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*. See also the writings of Rabbi David Kimhi on philology as theology. Interestingly, Noam Chomsky's father, Joseph Chomsky, edited Kimhi.

Notes

1 'Mediaeval Laughter', *Speculum* 21 (1946), 290

2 A typical remark is that of Herman Adalbert Daniel, who introduces his textual study of *Dies Irae* with the remark that it is 'uno omnium consensu sacrae poeseos summum decus et ecclesiae latinae *keimhlion* . . . pretiossimum' - *Thesaurus Hymnologicus* II (Leipzig: J.A. Barthius, 1844), 112. The same scholar maintains that the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* is likewise so perfect in its own way that it is impossible to institute a comparison between it and the *Dies Irae* in terms of intrinsic merit - *ibid*., 137-138. Other similar encomia by Philip Schaff, Abraham Coles, J.M. Neale, and others may be found quoted by H.T. Henry in his articles, '*Dies Irae*,' *Catholic Encyclopedia* IV,788, and '*Stabat Mater*', *ibid*., XIV,240. Verdicts still current that the *Dies Irae* is 'the greatest of all Latin hymns' - F. Brittain, *The Medieval Latin and Romance Lyric to A.D. 1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937), p. 197 - seem to be intended as reaffirmations of accepted opinions formulated some decades ago rather than as judgments passed anew.

3 See Samuel Willoughby Duffield, *The Latin Hymn-Writers and Their Hymns*, ed. and completed by R.E. Thompson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1899), pp. 401.415, especially p. 407.

4 'Fifty Versions of "Dies Irae"', *Dublin Review* IX (1883), 56-57 (the article is unsigned).

5 John Julian, *A Dictionary of Hymnology* (London: John Murray, 1915), pp. 299-301.

6 Cf. Daniel, *op. cit*., II,137. Daniel is at some pains to show that there are some dissimilarities between the two hymns - the reason for his pains being that the similarities are so urgent and inescapable, as he himself notes.

7 'Regarding, then, Beauty as my province [in composing *The Raven*], my next question referred to the tone of its highest manifestation - and all experience has shown that this tone is one of sadness' - The Philosophy of Composition' (first pub. in *Graham's Magazine*, April, 1846), *The Complete Works of Edgard Allen Poe*, ed. by James A. Harrison (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1902), XIV,198. Cf. also Wordsworth's typical association of beauty and foreboding ('I grew up fostered alike by beauty and by fear') reflected in the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* and discussed by C.H. Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth* (London: G. Bell, 1928), pp. 147 ff.

8 A survey of work done since 1914 concerning this poetry is given by Theodore Spencer and Mark van Doren, *Studies in Metaphysical Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930).

9 *Thesauri Hymnologici Prosarium*, Part Two, ed. Clemens Blume and H.M. Bannister ('Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi', No. 54; Leipzig: O.R. Reisland, 1915-1922), I,150.

10 *Explanatio in Canticum Beatae Mariae, Hugonis de S. Victore Opera Omnia*, I, in *Patrologia Latinae Cursus Completus* (referred to hereafter as *PL*), ed. J.-P. Migne, CLXXV (Paris: Migne, 1854), col. 415.

11*Thes. Hymn. Pros*., Part Two, I,221.

12*Ibid*., I,220. Cf. Ephesians 4,8 ('captivam duxit captivitatem') and Psalm 67,19.

13 *Ibid.*, I,249.

14 *Ibid.*, I,327.

15*De Emmanuele Libri Duo, Richardi a Sancto Victore Opera Omnia*, *PL* CXCVI (1855), col. 620. In *De Beatae Mariae Virginitate, Opera Omnia*, II, *PL* CLXXVI (1854), col. 872, Hugh of St Victor treats of the allied question of why the Holy Spirit is not Christ's father according to the flesh since it was He who miraculously brought about Christ's conception of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1,35).

16 *Sermo* CLXXXIV (In Natali Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, 1), *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera Omnia*, V.1., PL XXXVIII (1845), col. 997.

17*The Poems of John Donne*, ed. Herbert J.C. Grierson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), I.369.

18*The Life and Letters of John Donne*, ed. Edmund Gosse (London: William Heinemann, 1899), I,103.

19*Thes. Hymn. Pros*., Part Two, I,384.

20 See John 13,12-17; Philippians 2,5-12.

21 See G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp. 56-109.

22*Thes. Hymn. Pros*., Part Two, I,227-228.

23*Ibid*., I,154.

24*Ibid*., II,376.
25*Hymnographi Latini*, II, ed. Guido Maria Dreves ('Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi', No. 50; Leipzig: O.R. Reisland, 1907), 586.
26*Summa Theologica*, Pars III, q.60, a.6, esp. obj.3 and ad.3. Quotations and citations from St Thomas Aquinas' prose works are all made from the *Opera Omnia*, ed. Stanislaus Eduardus Fretté and Paulus Maré (34 vols; Paris: Ludovicus Vives, 1871-1880).
27 *Sermo* CXC (In Natali Domini, vii), *Opera Omnia*, v,1, *PL* XXXVIII (1845), col. 1008: 'Quis est iste infans? Infans enim diciture, quod non possit fari, id est loqui. Ergo et infans et Verbum est'. Cf. *Ennaratio in Psalmum XLIV Opera Omnia*, IV.1, *PL* XXXVI (1845), col. 495.
28 Quoted by T.S. Eliot, 'Lancelot Andrewes,' *Selected Essays, 1917-1932* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1932), p. 297.
29*Collected Poems, 1909-1935* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936, p. 37):

> The word within a word unable to speak a word
> Swaddled with darkness.

30 Dom André Willmart, O.S.B., 'La tradition littéraire et textuelle de l'"Adoro te deuote"', *Recherches de theologie ancienne et médiévale*, I (1929), 159. The 'latens deitas' is not, however, the word of by any means so thick a wit as the 'latens hostia'! of one manuscript which Dom Willmart cites. The attribution of this poem to St Thomas Aquinas hardly admits any longer of serious doubt: see J.F.E. Raby, 'The Date and Authorship of the Poem *Adoro Te Deuote*', *Speculum*, XX (1945), 236-238.
31 Dom Willmart's text, *loc. cit.* In *Hymnog. Lat.*, II,589, the lines are only slightly different:

> Credo, quidquid dixit Dei Filius
> Verbo veritatis nihil verius.

32 'The Lyfe of Jhon Picus', *The Works of Sir Thomas More*, ed. William Rastell (London, 1557), p. 2.
33 Act I, Scene vii, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, Ed. W.J. Craig (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 983.
34 *Hymnog. Lat*., II,584.
35 'Pâque', *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, ed. F. Vigoroux (12th ed.; Paris, Letouzey et Ané, 1912), IV.2,2094.
36 *Verbum Supernum, Hymnog. Lat.* II,588. Cf. St Augustine's 'Verbum . . . ibi manens, hinc procedens', *Sermo* CLXXXVII (In Natali Domini IV), *Opera Omnia*, V.1, *PL* XXXVIII (1845), col. 1001.
37 Pierre Pourrat, *La spiritualité chrétienne* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1928), II,229,253,275. The *Meditations on the Life of Christ* once erroneously attributed to St Bonaventure but certainly written by a thirteenth-century Franciscan under the influence of St Bernard of Clairvaux are typical of this school. Of them Pourrat notes: 'Elles se proposent de faire aimer le Christ, moins par des élévations sur sa doctrine divine que par le récit de sa vie mortelle. Les considérations font place aux descriptions colorées . . . C'est l'humanité du Christ qui est ainsi mise en un puissant relief' (pp. 282-283.
38 On the 'torment' associated with courtly love, see A.J. Denomy, 'An Inquiry into the Origins of Courtly Love', *Mediaeval Studies*, VI (1944), 183-185. I do not, of course, mean to imply by this connection between courtly love and devotional life any of the facile connections between courtly love and Christian mysticism which have at times been attempted and which are dismissed in Father Denomy's excellent study (pp. 188-192).
39 *Thes. Hymn Pros.* Part Two, I,312.
40*Ibid*., p. 269.
41 Act IV, Scene i, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, p. 994.
42 Raby, 'The Date and Authorship of the Poem *Adoro Te Deuoto*,' *loc. cit.*
43 Dom Willmart's text, 'La tradition littéraire et textuelle de l'"Adoro te deuote"'. loc. cit.
44 Raby, 'The Date and Authorship of the Poem *Adoro Te Deuoto*', *op. cit*. p. 237; 'eueste' should apparently be 'queste'. - Beyond that furnished here by Jacopone, there is other evidence of the tendency on the part of those who follow Thomas to disregard the keenness of his perceptions: see the remarks made above (pp. 317-318) concerning textual corruptions in the 'Adoro Te Deuote'.
45 A familiar instance would be the *Ave Maria Stella*, written between the sixth and ninth centuries, which uses the common wity conceit developed from the fact that the Blessed Virgin has been hailed by the Angel Gabriel with the word *Ave*, which is *Eva* reversed and by reason of this fact hits off Mary's role as the 'Second Eve', the antithesis of the first woman: 'Mutans nomen Evae' - *Thesauri Hymnologici Hymnarum* I, ed. Clemens Blume ('Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi', 51; Leipzig: O.R. Reisland, 1908), 140. Or there is the sixth-century *Vexilla Regis* of Venantius Fortunatus, in which Christ, Who is Life Itself, undergoes death to make life available to man:

> Qua vita mortem pertulit
> Et morta vitam reddidit.

46 'Poetica scientia est de his quae propter defectum veritatis non possunt a ratione capi; unde oportet quod quasi quibusdam similitudinibus ratio seducatur: theologica autem est de his quae sunt supra

rationem: et ideo modus symbolicus utrique communis est, cum neutra rationi proportionetur' - I*n Sententias Petri Lombardi Commentaria*, prolog., q.1,a.5 ad 3. Cf. *In I Posteriorum Analyticorum Aristotelis Expositio*, lect. I, where Thomas places poetic as a logic below the strict logic of scientific demonstration and also below the other logics of probability realized in dialectic and rhetoric. In the case of poetic, he says, 'sola existimatio declinat in aliquam partem contradictionis propter aliquam repraesentationem.'

47 'Ex hoc ipso quod intellectus noster accipit a phantasmatibus, sequitur in ipso quod scientiam habeat collativam, inqunatum ex multis sensibus fit una memoria, et ex multis memoriis unum experimentum, et ex multis experimentis unum universale principium, ex quo alia concludit.' - *In III Sent*., d.14, q.1, a.3, sol.3; cf. *In II Sent*., d.3, q.1, a.2 sol.; d.39, q.3, a. 1 sol.

48 See *In I Post. Anal.*, lect.1, and cf. my article, 'The Province of Rhetoric and Poetic', *Modern Schoolman* XIX (1942), 24-27.

49 *Ars Poetica*, in *The Oxford Anthology of American Literature*, ed. William Rose Benét and Norman Holmes Pearson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 1501.

50 See St Thomas, *De Veritate*, q. 8, a. 15. An excellent and unusually discerning treatment of Thomas' observations on the various intellective processes, together with the relevant texts from Thomas' various works, which it would take too much space to list and discuss here, is to be found in Bernard Lonergan, 'The Concept of Verbum in the Writings of St Thomas Aquinas', *Theological Studies* VII (1946), 349-392, esp. 384 ff.

51 'Quandam namque vera sunt de Deo, quae omnem facultatem humanae rationis excedunt, ut Deum esse trinum et unum. Quaedam vero sunt ad quae etian ratio naturalis pertingere potest, sicut est Deum esse, Deum esse unum, et alia hujusmodi'. - *Contra Gentiles*, lib. I, c. 3.

52*In I Sent., prolog. S. Thomae*. Thomas here opens with the quotation for Ecclesiasticus 24.40: 'Ego sapientia effudi flumine; ego quasi trames aquae immensae de fluvio; ego quasi fluvius Diorix, et sicut aquaeductus exivi de paradiso. Dixi: Rigabo hortum plantationum, et inebriabo partus mei fructum'. On the theme provided by this text, he elaborates the whole sweep of God's plan for created being in terms of the revelation of the Trinity and the consequent initiation of rational creatures into God's interior life, both effect by the Incarnation.

53 *Contra. Gent.*, lib. 1, c. 7.

54*Ibid*., c. 8; *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 32, a. 1

55 Thomas comes back to this subject time and time again; e.g. *In I Sent.* d. 3, q. 1; *In III Sent.*, d.23; *De Ver*., q. 14; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 32; etc.

56 For Thomas' observations on this point, see P. Hoenen, 'De Origine Primorum Principiorum Scientiae', *Gregorianum* XIV (1933), 152-184.

57 In the plenary act of human understanding involved in insight into a principle such as the principle of contradiction, experience itself gives direct content to the dictum 'Intellectus in actu est intellectum in actu' (cf. *Sum. Theol*., I, q. 14, a. 2; q. 55, a.1 and 2; etc.), although human intellection never achieves the perfect identification of intellect and object found in divine intellection. Cf. Thomas' way of speaking of first principles as 'prima principia quorum est intellectus' (*In III Sent*., d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1): back of this expression lies the fact that to have these principles before the mind is simply to understand; they are in themselves totally perspicuous: cf. *Sum. Theol*. I, q. 64, a. 2, resp.; *In Boetii de Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 1 ad 5.

58 Cf. Hoenen, 'De Origine Primorum Principiorum Scientiae,' op. cit., 179-184.

59 It is in the imagination that mathematics is validated, St Thomas points out, and not directly in the senses. See Jacques Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, trans. by Bernard Wall (New York: Charles Scribner, 1940), p. 39, and Lonergan, 'The Concept of *Verbum* in the Writings of St Thomas Aquinas,' op. cit., 374-375; cg. Thomas' observations on the conditions of mathematical infinity, as in *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 7, a. 3 ad 1. One might note that this implies that Thomas' notion of mathematics was quite open to non-Euclidianism.

60 Psalm 35,10; *Sum Theol*., I, q. 12, a. 2, resp.

61*Sum. Theol*., I, q. 1, a. 5, resp.

62*De Ver*., q. 14, a. 2, resp.: 'a fide communiter accepta secundum quam credere dicimur id quod vehementer opinamur, scilicet vel testimonio alicujus hominis'; a. 8, resp.: 'Per se objectum fidei veritas prima est . . . Unde neque hominis neque angeli testimonio assentire infallibiliter in veritatem duceret, nisi quantum in eis loquentis Dei testimonium consideretyr'. Cf. *In I Post Anal*., lect 1.

63 2 Corinthians 5,6; Sum Theol., II,1, q. 4, a. 5, resp.

64 Michel d'Herbigny, *La théologie du Révélé* (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1921), pp. 163-165.

65to musthrion: Ephesians 3,8-12. For a discussion of 'the mystery', see Fernand Prat, *The Theology of St Paul*, I, trans, from the 11th French edition by John L. Stoddard (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1927), 308-309, and II, trans. from the 10th French edition by John L. Stoddard (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1926), 5-8, 42, 383-385.

66 Romans 10, 32-33. Cf. 1 Corinthians 1,23-24.
67*Epistola CXX, Opera Omnia*, II, *PL* XXXIII (1845), col. 453-454. See Etienne Gilson, *Introduction a l'étude de Saint Augustin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1931), pp. 34 ff.
68 'Extra significantiam sermonis est, extra sensus intentionem, extra intelligentiae conceptionem' - *De Trinitate*, lib. 2, n. 5, *Opera Omnia*, II, PL X (1845), col. 54.
69 An historical survey of patristic and medieval thought on this matter is given by Henri Lubac, Surnaturel: Etudes historiques (Paris: Aubier, 1946), pp. 328-394.
70 Speaking particularly of Richard of St Victor and St Bonaventure, concerning this vacillation and the state of mine responsibile for it Matthias Joseph Scheeben has an illuminating statement: 'The procedure of these two kindred souls [Bonaventure and Richard] is attributable to their point of view, which is contemplative, rather than analytic. Their ecstatic spirits take flight to the heights which faith points out to them: and when they look about them with their natural reason, everything seems as near and obvious to them as objects that reason actually perceives by itself. The thing seems as near and obvious to them as objects that reason actually perceives by itself. The arguments they adduce for the Trinity really prove, that is, they are objectively sound; and in the supposition of their truth the conclusion follows with evident necessity, at least to some extent. But when their glance travels back along the path of reason, they assert that the basis for the Trinity is a 'truth that transcends reason' (Richard, *Benjamin minor*, lib. IV, cc. 2,3); and in one passage St Bonaventure says expressly: 'The Trinity of persons is not knowable by a creature who ascends by way of reason from the creature to God' (*I Sent.* d. 3, a. 1. q. 4). According to Richard (*loc. cit*.), the mind can attain to objects that surpass reason only when it is joined to faith: 'In the investigation discussion and assertion of these objects, the human reason accomplishes absolutely nothing unless it is joined to faith'. - *The Mysteries of Christianity*, trans. Cyril Vollert, S. J. (ST Louis: B. Herder, 1946), p. 39, n. 19. This book has an excellent treatment of the Christian mysteries in general.
71 Council of Sens, 1140 or 1141 A.D. - *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, ed. Henricus Denziger, Clemens Bannwart and Johannes Bapt. Umberg (21-23rd ed.; Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1937), n. 368 (p. 179).
72 'Duo enim simulacra erant proposita homini, in quibus invisibilia videre potuisset: unum naturae, et unum gratiae. Simulacrum naturae erat species hujus mundi. Simulacrum autem gratiae erat humanitas Verbi'. - *Commentariorum in Hierarchiam Coelestiam S. Dionysii Areopagitae Libri X*, lib. 1, c. 1, *Opera Omnia*, I, *PL* CLXXV (1854), col. 926.
73 In 1870, when the Vatican Council undertook to formulate, in terms taken from the teholyg grown up around the question, a definitive description of the condition of Christian doctrine with relation to the human reasoning process, its declarations came to the same thing as Thomas' regarding the distinction between naturally known and supernaturally known truths, and, like Thomas, it declared that the deposit of faith contains 'mysteria proprie dicta'. - Denziger, Bannwart, Umberg, (eds.), *Enchiridion Sym.*, nn. 1796, 1816 (pp. 596, 500).
74 For a survey of recent opinion here, see Spenser and Van Doren, op. cit., and Helen C. White, *The Metaphysical Poets* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), pp. 70 ff.
75*Of Wit*, in *The English Writings of Abraham Cowley*, ed. A.R. Waller, Poems ('Cambridge English Classics'; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), I.16.
76 In Charles Sears Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 200, quoted from E. du Méril, *Poésies populaires du moyen âge* (Paris, 1847), p. 153.