

Thomas Aquinas' Attribution of Participation to Aristotle

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I. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of his study of Thomas Aquinas' understanding of participation, Louis-Bertrand Geiger notes a striking contrast between Aristotle's and Aquinas' use of the doctrine:

In Aristotle, other than the passages where they serve to define the Platonic doctrine, the term μέθεξις or the verb μετέχειν are extremely rare. They almost never have a meaning other than that of the common language. One cannot be surprised if participation does not offer philosophical content in the eyes of Aristotle. In St. Thomas, on the contrary, the terms: *participatio*, *participare*, and their derivatives, are found almost on each page.¹

That the term "participation" scarcely appears in Aristotle's texts is not surprising since Aristotle is critical of the Platonic doctrines of the Forms and participation in *Metaphysics* (MP) 1.6 and 1.9. What is surprising, however, is that Aquinas thinks that participation does offer philosophical content in the eyes of Aristotle, for, as we will see, in his commentaries on Aristotle's MP and *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE), Aquinas uses participation to solve problems in Aristotle's texts and, thus, judges that Aristotle accepts and uses the doctrine of participation.

The fact that Aquinas explicates Aristotle's texts with the notion of participation has not gone unnoticed. For example, Wayne Hankey discusses passages in Aquinas' commentary on NE 10 where Aquinas appeals to participation to solve the problem of how intellect may be divine and beyond the human yet proper to the human, and this essay builds upon Hankey's work in this regard.² Furthermore, Stephen Brock discusses Aquinas' commentary on MP 12.7.1072b1-3, where Aquinas explains that the mobile, through

1 Geiger, *La participation*, 10-11.

2 Hankey, "Complexitur Omnem," 194-97.

its own motion, can participate in the immobile as an end, and he attempts to show that Aquinas does not intend to attribute the technical sense of participation to Aristotle.³ Against Brock, I argue that Aquinas does indeed attribute the technical sense of participation to Aristotle, although I neither want to criticize nor defend Aquinas' use of participation to explicate Aristotle's texts.

In light of the fact that Aquinas judges that Aristotle accepts and uses the notion of participation, the main question that I want to consider is, "Where in Aristotle's philosophy did Aquinas find the doctrine of participation?" A solution to this question, I suggest, is found in Aristotle's doctrine of *pros hen* homonymy, which is a method of uniting homonymous uses of a term by relating them in some way to the primary sense of that term. I argue that Aquinas finds participation in Aristotle's notion of *pros hen* homonymy because Aquinas uses *pros hen* homonymy to unite various types of substances by relating them to God through participation, and, as I will show, Aristotle uses *pros hen* homonymy to unite various types of substances by relating them to God as well. Thus, Aquinas could infer that, in this use of *pros hen* homonymy, Aristotle unites substances to God through participation.

I divide my discussion into three sections. Firstly, I outline Plato's doctrines of the Forms and participation as well as two of Aristotle's criticisms of these doctrines. Secondly, I show that in his commentaries on the *MP* and the *NE*, Aquinas attributes participation to Aristotle. Finally, I argue for my solution to the main question of this essay. Let us begin with the first.

II. ARISTOTLES' CRITICISMS OF THE PLATONIC DOCTRINES OF THE FORMS AND PARTICIPATION

Plato's ontology consists of universal, immaterial entities, which he calls the Forms, and particular sensible entities. He posited the existence of the Forms as a way of accounting for the fact that multiple sensible objects possess a common characteristic.⁴

3 Brock, "The Causality of the Unmoved Mover," 821-6.

4 Allen, "Participation and Predication," 160. Cf. *Phd.* 101c.

In the *Republic*, for example, Plato writes, “We are accustomed to hypothesize one Form in relation to each of the many things to which we give the same name.”⁵ Thus, there is one unique Form of Beauty, Beauty itself, which stands in some relation to the many beautiful things. The Form of Beauty is only what it is (Beauty), and it never changes but remains the same; in contrast, particular beautiful things possess beauty, and they constantly change and never remain the same. Thus, the Forms are invisible and are only grasped by reason, but particulars are visible and are perceived through the senses (*Phd.* 78d-79a; *Symp.* 210a-212a). In the *Phaedo*, Plato explains what the relationship between a Form and its particulars is: a Form is the cause of the characteristic which a group of particulars possess in common (*Phd.* 100c-101c). Thus, beautiful things are not the causes of their own beauty; rather, “beautiful things become beautiful through Beauty.”⁶

Plato introduces the doctrine of participation to explain how a Form causes its particulars to possess the characteristic which the Form itself is.⁷ In the *Phaedo*, Plato writes, “It appears to me that if something other than Beauty itself exists, then it is beautiful through no other reason than that it participates in that Beauty.”⁸ The causal relation of participation that exists between particulars and their Form also grounds the linguistic relation of *eponymy*, namely, that particulars derive their names from and are called after their Form.⁹ Plato states this linguistic relation most clearly in the *Parmenides* where Socrates agrees to the following question that is put to him by Parmenides, “Does it seem to you that, as you say, there are certain Forms from which these other things by participating [in them] are named after them?”¹⁰

5 *Rep.* 596a: εἶδος γὰρ πού τι ἐν ἑκάστων εἰώθαμεν τίθεσθαι περὶ ἑκάστα τὰ πολλὰ, οἷς ταυτὸν ὄνομα ἐπιφέρομεν. Unless I indicate otherwise, all translations from Greek and Latin texts are my own but are assisted at times by those translations that I include in the bibliography.

6 *Phd.* 100e: ...τῷ καλῷ τὰ καλὰ [γίγνεται] καλὰ....

7 Allen, “Participation and Predication,” 161.

8 *Phd.* 100c: Φαίνεται γὰρ μοι, εἰ τί ἐστιν ἄλλο καλὸν πλὴν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, οὐδὲ τί ἐν ἄλλο καλὸν εἶναι ἢ διότι μετέχει ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ.... Cf. *Phd.* 101c; *Parm.* 129a, 131a.

9 Ward, *Aristotle on Homonymy*, 27-33.

10 *Parm.* 130e: δοκεῖ σοι, ὡς φῆς, εἶναι εἶδη ἅττα, ὧν τάδε τὰ ἄλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα τὰς ἐπωνυμίας αὐτῶν ἴσχειν....

Plato calls his solution to the problem of how universals and particulars relate “participation” because the particulars possess in part what the universals wholly are. Thus, in the *Parmenides*, Socrates argues that a particular thing can partake in opposite Forms (e.g., likeness and unlikeness) but that a Form itself, being wholly what it is, cannot become its opposite (*Parm.* 129a-b). Furthermore, in the *Phaedo*, Plato assumes this whole-part distinction in his demonstration that the Forms are indeed different entities than particulars. Since equal things can be both equal and unequal while remaining the same, but the Equal itself cannot become Unequal and remain the same, then the particular equal things must be a different sort of entity than the Form of Equality (*Phd.* 74b-c).

In the *Phaedo*, Plato is not concerned with clarifying the exact nature of participation (*Phd.* 100d). However, in the *Parmenides*, Parmenides and Socrates consider three ways in which one could analyze participation: the particulars might participate in the whole of their Form, in part of their Form, or in their Forms by being made like them, as images. Parmenides demonstrates that each of these analyses of participation leads to difficulties (*Parm.* 130e-133a), and his arguments compel Socrates to agree that another means by which particulars participate in the Forms must be sought (*Parm.* 133a). As we will see, one of Aristotle’s criticisms of Plato’s doctrine of participation is that he left the doctrine unanalyzed.

Aristotle’s sketch of the Platonic doctrines of the Forms and participation in *MP* 1.6 is consistent with the picture that I have presented of them. In *MP* 1.6, Aristotle writes that Plato separated the particular and changeable objects from the universal and unchanging ideas and held that “all sensible things are named after [the Ideas] and in relation to them, for the many things are of the same name as [the Ideas] insofar as they participate in them.”¹¹ However, when Aristotle engages with the theory of Forms in more detail and criticizes it, a number of interpretive difficulties arise. For example, Lloyd Gerson points out that it is

11 *MP* 1.6.987b8-10: ...τὰ δ’ αἰσθητὰ παρὰ ταῦτα καὶ κατὰ ταῦτα λέγεσθαι πάντα· κατὰ μέθεξιν γὰρ εἶναι τὰ πολλὰ ὁμώνυμα τοῖς εἶδεσιν.

not clear whether Aristotle criticizes Plato's theory of the Forms or the theory of someone else, such as a member of the Academy. Indeed, Gerson suggests Aristotle might be using these criticisms to bring attention to inadequate theories of the Forms, and Plato may have rejected these same inadequate versions.¹² Yet, it is beyond my purpose to judge with which proponent of the Forms Aristotle disagrees. Rather, I point out these difficulties because, as we will see at the end of section III, Aquinas also seems to maintain that Aristotle criticized inadequate versions of the doctrine of participation but did not reject the doctrine completely. For now, however, let us continue on to outline two of Aristotle's criticisms of the Forms and participation.

First, Aristotle writes in *MP* 1.9 that the term "participation" is an "empty phrase and a poetical metaphor."¹³ When read in conjunction with *MP* 1.6, this criticism appears to mean that Plato did not adequately analyze the causal relationship between the Forms and the sense particulars to which "participation" refers:

In respect to "participation," Plato changed the name only. For the Pythagoreans said that the things which exist by the imitation of numbers, but Plato by participation, changing the name. Yet what the participation or imitation of the Forms might be they left to seek in common.¹⁴

Secondly, Aristotle brings the renowned "Third Man Argument" (TMA) against the theory of the Forms, a criticism which also relates to the doctrine of participation, as I will explain below. This argument is found in two forms in the *Parmenides* (132a-b, 132d-133a), and Aristotle, although he does not state the full argument, refers to it several times in the *MP* (1.9.990b15-17, 1.9.990b34-991a8, 7.13.1038b34-1039a3). However, in his commentary on the *MP*, Alexander preserves several versions of the TMA, among which is a full form of the argument that is attributed to Aristotle's lost work

12 Gerson, *Aristotle and Other Platonists*, 228-231.

13 *MP* 1.9.991a21-22: ... κενολογεῖν ἐστὶ καὶ μεταφορὰς λέγειν ποιητικός.

14 *MP* 1.6.987b10-14: τὴν δὲ μέθεξιν τοῦνομα μόνον μετέβαλεν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ Πυθαγόρειοι μιμήσει τὰ ὄντα φασὶν εἶναι τῶν ἀριθμῶν, Πλάτων δὲ μεθέξει, τοῦνομα μεταβαλὼν. τὴν μέντοι γε μέθεξιν ἢ τὴν μίμησιν ἧτις ἂν εἴη τῶν εἰδῶν ἀφείσαν ἐν κοινῷ ζητεῖν.

On the Ideas. Since Gail Fine has shown that all of the iterations of the argument that Alexander preserves are logically equivalent,¹⁵ and since Harold Cherniss has shown that the incomplete versions found in Aristotle's *MP* are consistent with the version that Alexander attributes to Aristotle,¹⁶ I limit my presentation of the TMA to a synthesis of *MP* 1.9.990b34-991a8 and the version attributed to Aristotle in Alexander's commentary (84.21-85.3).¹⁷

The TMA strikes at the theory of the Forms by using the premises that establish the existence of the Forms to demonstrate that each Form cannot be unique.¹⁸ As we saw above, the proponents of the Forms argue that if the term "man," for example, is predicated univocally (predicated with the same meaning) of many particular men, then there must exist a single universal entity, a Form, which is the characteristic of "man" itself and which accounts for the attribute of "man" possessed in common by the many particulars. Now, the essential move of the TMA is to group the Form of Man and the particular men together into another plurality and to apply the same reasoning to this new group. In this new group, the predicate "man" is not only predicated univocally of many particular men, but it must be predicated univocally of the particular men and the Form of Man. For, if the term "man" predicated of particulars has a different meaning than when it is predicated of the Form, then the Form of Man would not explain the unity among the particular men. However, if when a name is predicated univocally of a plurality of entities, one must posit another entity over and above them to account for their unity, then there must exist a third universal entity which also is the attribute "man" (the "third Man") to account for the unity that exists in the group which contains the Form of Man and the

15 Fine, *On Ideas*, 223-224.

16 Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism*, 289-290.

17 See Fine, *On Ideas*, 30-43 for evidence and arguments for the position that Aristotle wrote *On the Ideas*.

18 Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism*, 288; Fine, *On Ideas*, 204.

particular men. The same argument can then be applied to this new group to produce a fourth Man and so on, and so the Form of Man is not unique. The TMA can be applied to every Form.

I choose to present the TMA not only to provide a sense of why Aristotle criticizes some versions of the theory of the Forms, but I also choose it because Ward's attempt to defend Plato's theory of Forms against it implies that participation establishes a *pros hen* relation among Forms and particulars, and this implication of Ward's defense is similar to Aquinas' integration of *pros hen* homonymy and participation.¹⁹ Her defense runs like this: the TMA argument works only if a term is predicated univocally of a Form and its particulars, but Plato does not think that a term is predicated of a Form and its particulars univocally or homonymously. Rather, Ward holds that for Plato a term is predicated of a Form in a similar but different way than its particulars. A term is predicated similarly insofar as the Form and the particulars share a common characteristic, but that term is also predicated differently insofar as the particulars *possess* the characteristic whereas the Form *is* the characteristic.²⁰ Thus, according to Ward, the TMA fails.

Now, Ward's explanation of how a term is predicated of a Form and its particulars amounts to asserting that the doctrine of participation unites the various senses of what Aristotle calls a *pros hen* homonym. A *pros hen* homonym is a term whose meaning is neither completely univocal nor completely homonymous when it is predicated of various types of entities, and the term's unity of meaning is created by the relation that these different senses of the term bear to a core sense of the term.²¹ Since, for Plato, participation both creates a real relationship between particulars and their

19 This is not a novel integration. See Gerson, *Aristotle and Other Platonists*, 229 who quotes Proclus describing the relationship between the Forms and particulars with Aristotle's language of *pros hen* homonymy (*In Parm.* 880, 8-13).

20 Ward, *Aristotle on Homonymy*, 31-32, 38. With this explanation, Ward builds on Allen's work in which he attributes to Plato a similar defense against the TMA (Allen, "Participation and Predication," 161-164).

21 See *MP* 4.1.1003a33-b19. I will explain Aristotle's account of *pros hen* homonymy more fully in section IV.

Form and grounds how particulars are named after their Form, participation, in Ward's defense against the TMA, establishes a relation in which a term is predicated of particulars in a similar but different way than it is predicated of the Form. Therefore, on Ward's account, the doctrine of participation unites for Plato the various senses of the type of term that Aristotle calls a *pros hen* homonym.

III. AQUINAS' ATTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATION TO ARISTOTLE

Although Aristotle is critical of Plato's doctrines of the Forms and participation, in this section I argue that Aquinas attributes the doctrine of participation to Aristotle, for in his Aristotelian commentaries Aquinas uses participation to solve problems in Aristotle's texts. In particular, I will argue that in his commentary on the *MP*, Aquinas' explanation of the object of God's thought presupposes the doctrine of participation, and I will show that, in his commentary on the *NE*, Aquinas uses participation to explain how intellect may be both divine yet proper to the human.

Yet, before I show how Aquinas uses participation to solve these two problems in Aristotle's texts, let me address a potential objection to an assumption of my argument that I present in this section. This assumption is that if Aquinas, in his Aristotelian commentaries, uses a philosophical doctrine to solve a problem in Aristotle's writings, then he attributes that philosophical doctrine to Aristotle. One could object to this assumption by maintaining that Aquinas may be using Aristotle's texts as a jumping-off point to discuss his own ideas or to address debates current during the time when he is writing, much like he does in his commentary on the *Sentences*.²² However, this objection fails since, although Aquinas' commentaries on Aristotle were used in his theological writings, his purpose in writing the philosophical commentaries is to present Aristotle's doctrines as Aristotle understood them,²³ and for the most part Aquinas does so, even

22 This objection is inspired by comments that J. Owens makes on the term "commentary" in Owens, "Aquinas as Aristotelian Commentator," 215-216.

23 Doig, "Aquinas and Aristotle," 33-44.

if there are a few passages in which his own theological concerns influence his interpretation of Aristotle.²⁴ Indeed, even if the passages in which Aquinas uses participation to solve problems in Aristotle's texts are the same as those passages in which he shows a theological concern, it does not necessarily follow that Aquinas did not identify his interpretation with Aristotle's view.

Let us now begin considering the problem of the object of God's thought. Firstly, we will consider both how this problem arises in Aristotle's *MP* and two answers that Aristotelian scholars have given to it: (i) God is a Narcissus-like God who only thinks Himself and (ii) God thinks creatures as well as Himself. Then, we will consider Aquinas' solution to this problem in his commentary on the *MP*: Aquinas unequivocally affirms that God knows Himself and creatures, and he holds that God knows creatures precisely by knowing Himself. I will argue that by attributing this solution to Aristotle, Aquinas implicitly attributes the doctrine of participation to him as well.

For Aristotle, the essence of God is active thinking.²⁵ In *MP* 12.7, after demonstrating that God is pure actuality,²⁶ Aristotle asserts that God's life "is like the best life we possess for a short time, for He always possesses this life, but this is impossible for us."²⁷ This life that humans rise to temporarily is the active contemplation of the intellect (*MP* 12.7; *NE* 10.7-8), so God's life is a life of active thought.²⁸ Whereas human contemplation must cease since it is

24 Owens, "Aquinas as Aristotelian Commentator," 234-238.

25 For Aristotle, thought consists of a hierarchy of potentialities and actualities, and I will expand on this hierarchy in section IV. God's thinking, of course, does not contain potentiality, for God is pure actuality.

26 In *MP* 12.6-7, Aristotle aims to demonstrate the existence of "a certain eternal and immutable substance," (*MP* 12.6.1071b4-5: ...ἄϊδιόν τινα οὐσίαν ἀκίνητον) which I interpret as a single divine being. However, I acknowledge that such an interpretation does not mean that Aristotle rejects his inherited polytheism for monotheism. See Bodéüs, *Aristotle and the Living Immortals*, 1-5, 8.

27 *MP* 12.7.1072b14-16: διαγωγῆ δ' ἔστιν οἷα ἡ ἀρίστη μικρὸν χρόνον ἡμῖν οὕτω γὰρ ἀεὶ ἐκεῖνο: ἡμῖν μὲν γὰρ ἀδύνατον....

28 Reasoning from what humans are like to what God is like in this way is what Aryeh Kosman calls a reverse attribution; namely, that since human thinking has what we judge to be divine characteristics, it is the clearest likeness of the divine essence (Kosman, *The Activity of Being*, 215-17). Epistemologically,

the activity of an underlying potentiality, namely, the quality of wisdom (*NE* 6.7, 10.7), God always possesses the life of active contemplation because He is essentially the actuality of thought, as Aristotle demonstrates in *MP* 12.7, “Life belongs to God, for the actuality of the intellect is life, and God is this actuality.”²⁹ Indeed, this passage also implies that God is essentially life as well.

In *MP* 12.9, Aristotle raises several difficulties concerning the divine intellect, one of which concerns the nature of the object of divine thought. In his discussion of this difficulty, Aristotle divides the possible objects of divine thinking thus: “It must think itself or something other, and if something other, then it must think the same thing always or something different.”³⁰ He concludes that “[intellect] thinks itself, if it is the strongest, and thinking is a thinking of thinking.”³¹

Thus, the answer to the question of the content of God’s thinking is determined by what the proposition “thinking is a thinking of thinking” means, and this latter question is indeed controversial in Aristotelian scholarship. In general, two answers have been given. First, some hold that this proposition means that divine thinking is self-reflexive. Self-reflexive thinking is a thinking that is both subject and object, namely, a thinking that thinks its own activity of thinking as an object. Second, some hold that this proposition means that divine thinking is epistemically reflexive. Epistemically reflexive thinking is a thinking which is of an object other than itself and simultaneously of the intellect’s act of grasping its object. During this type of thinking, we know that we know or understand that we understand.

humans may learn about God by reasoning that God’s life is like a human’s life; however, ontologically human life is like God’s life, not the reverse. For, as we will see in section IV, human life is defined in reference to God.

29 *MP* 10.7.1072b26-27: καὶ ζωὴ δὲ γε ὑπάρχει: ἢ γὰρ νοῦ ἐνέργεια ζωῆ, ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἢ ἐνέργεια....

30 *MP* 12.9.1074b22-23: ... ἢ γὰρ αὐτὸς αὐτὸν ἢ ἕτερόν τι: καὶ εἰ ἕτερόν τι, ἢ τὸ αὐτὸ αἰεὶ ἢ ἄλλο.

31 *MP* 12.9.1074b33-35: αὐτὸν ἄρα νοεῖ, εἴπερ ἐστὶ τὸ κράτιστον, καὶ ἔστιν ἢ νόησις νοήσεως νόησις.

Now, not only do scholars disagree over which of these two interpretations is correct, but they also disagree over what each interpretation implies for the object of God's thought. Although the standard position is that "thinking is a thinking of thinking" refers to self-reflexivity and that this interpretation implies that God is a narcissus-like God whose active thinking is the object of His active thinking,³² there are at least four positions in total based on our analysis of the proposition "thinking is a thinking of thinking." Proponents of either self-reflexivity or epistemic reflexivity argue that their interpretation implies that God is narcissus-like, and other adherents of either interpretation argue that their position implies God thinks things other than Himself.³³

We can categorize Aquinas as one who maintains that "thinking is a thinking of thinking" means that divine thought is self-reflexive and that its object is both God Himself and creatures.³⁴ In his commentary on the *MP*, Aquinas writes that God understands Himself most perfectly and that

the more perfectly a principle is thought, the more perfectly its effect is thought in it, for what has a principle is contained in the power of the principle. Therefore, since, as it is said, heaven and all nature depend on the first principle, God, it is clear that God by knowing Himself, knows all things.³⁵

32 For discussions of the standard position, see Kosman, *The Activity of Being*, 221-3; Gerson, *Aristotle and Other Platonists*, 197; and Brunschwig, "Metaphysics Λ 9," 287-8. Note, these authors do not hold to the standard interpretation.

33 For example, Joseph Gerbasi holds that this proposition means self-reflexivity but that God knows creatures as well as Himself (Gerbasi, *The Metaphysical Origin*, 39-40); Brunschwig and Kosman maintain that this proposition means epistemic reflexivity and that God knows Himself but does not know creatures (Brunschwig, "Metaphysics Λ 9," 288-304; Kosman, *the Activity of Being*, 224-230); and Gerson holds that this proposition refers to epistemic reflexivity and that God knows both Himself and creatures (Gerson, *Aristotle and Other Platonists*, 199). For a further overview of the positions concerning the content of God's knowledge, see Koninck, "Aristotle on God as Thought Thinking Itself," 471-515.

34 As noted above, Gerbasi also takes this position; however, he argues for it differently than Aquinas. Gerbasi reasons that since knowledge of something includes the knowledge of that thing's contrary, God knows what is contrary to Himself when He knows Himself. What is contrary to Mind is formal privation which includes the forms of things in nature, and therefore God knows the essences of creatures (Gerbasi, *The Metaphysical Origin*, 39-40).

35 *In Metaph.* 12 lect. 11 n. 2615: Quanto autem aliquod principium perfectius intelligitur, tanto magis intelligitur in eo effectus eius: nam principia

By explaining Aristotle's doctrine thus, namely, that God thinks His effects by thinking Himself, Aquinas implicitly attributes the doctrine of participation to Aristotle, for, on Aquinas' account, God thinks His effects in Himself because they participate in His essence. Let us now consider where in Aquinas' writings this explanation is found.³⁶

In his commentary on the *De ebdomadibus* of Boethius, Aquinas distinguishes three types of participation, one of which is relevant for us: an effect, Aquinas writes, participates in its cause.³⁷ How, then, does efficient causality establish the relationship of participation between effect and cause? According to Aquinas, "Each agent makes something like itself,"³⁸ and therefore an effect participates in its cause by becoming like its agent through the agent's activity. Now, since God is the agent of the universe, He impresses on all things a likeness of His essence, and so all creatures participate in God. However, since God is a pre-eminent and transcendent agent, the likenesses that creatures receive are not perfect likenesses of God's essence; rather, they are more or less imperfect possessions of what God possesses maximally and essentially. The type of participation that efficient causality establishes may be called either participation by likeness or participation by formal hierarchy.³⁹

Participation by likeness is essential for God's knowledge of creatures. According to Aquinas, God knows His effects through knowing Himself "inasmuch as His essence contains a similitude

continentur in virtute principii. Cum igitur a primo principio, quod est Deus, dependeat caelum et tota natura, ut dictum est, patet, quod Deus cognoscendo seipsum, omnia cognoscit. For a defense of Aquinas' interpretation of "thinking is a thinking of thinking," see Atherton, "The Validity of Thomas' Interpretation," 156-62.

36 There is much debate over whether Aristotle's unmoved mover is an efficient cause, final cause, or both, and on the interpretation that the unmoved mover is both, there is debate over whether it is the final cause of other things, itself, or both. For those interested in the debate see Berti, "The Finality of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover," 863-76; Berti, "*Metaphysics* Λ 6," 200-206; Brock, "The Causality of the Unmoved Mover," 805-832; Flannery, "On Professor Berti's Interpretation," 833-61; and Ross, *Aristotle*, 185-7.

37 *De ebdo.* lect. 2 lines 65-115.

38 *ST* 1 q. 4 a. 3 resp.: Cum enim omne agens agat sibi simile in quantum est agens....

39 Geiger, *La participation*, 28-29, 66-71. See also Clarke, "The Meaning of Participation in Aquinas," 152.

of things other than Himself."⁴⁰ But, since these likenesses of God's essence that creatures possess are the way in which they participate in God, God knows creatures by knowing "each way His own perfection is participated by others."⁴¹ Thus, in his commentary on the *MP* where Aquinas explains that Aristotle's God as "thinking thinking of thinking" knows other things by thinking His effects in Himself, he must attribute the doctrine of participation to Aristotle for his explanation to succeed. For, God knows His effects in His self-knowledge insofar as their natures participate in and are likenesses of His essence.

Before I consider the second instance where Aquinas attributes participation to Aristotle, let us examine Brock's contention that we should not be worried about Aquinas' attribution of participation to Aristotle. As we saw in section I, Brock considers a passage in Aquinas' commentary on *MP* 12.7.1072b1-3 in which Aquinas claims that something mobile can tend, by its motion, toward participating in the unmoved mover as its end. We should not be worried that Aquinas is attributing a doctrine to Aristotle that Aristotle rejects, claims Brock, since participation for Aquinas sometimes does not carry its technical sense which includes the principle that the nature of the participant participates in some way in the nature of what is participated. For example, Brock argues that the celestial soul tends towards the unmoved mover by becoming like the unmoved mover, but it does not become like the unmoved mover in respect to the unmoved mover's nature; rather, it becomes like a Form that is in the unmoved mover's mind, and a Form exists in the unmoved mover's mind in the same way as the Form of an artifact exists in the mind of the artisan.⁴²

40 *ST* 1 q. 14 a. 5 resp.: ...inquantum essentia sua continet similitudinem aliorum ab ipso.

41 *ST* 1 q. 14 a. 6 resp.: ...quomodocumque participabilis est ab aliis sua perfectio. Although this is beyond what is necessary for my purpose, to be more precise, God knows creatures by knowing His essence as the exemplar ideas (a form that exists in God's intellect as the principle of making something) in which creatures participate. See *ST* 1 q. 14 a. 5-6; Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, 250; and Boland, *Ideas in God according to Aquinas*, 284-296.

42 Brock, "The Causality of the Unmoved Mover," 821-826.

The major problem with Brock's argument is that although a Form in the mind of an artisan is not the essence of that artisan, God is completely simple,⁴³ and therefore God's essence is both His intellect⁴⁴ and the intelligible species through which he understands.⁴⁵ Thus, the exemplar ideas in God's intellect, which are the principles by which God creates, are God's essence,⁴⁶ and God understands the many exemplar ideas through understanding His simple essence.⁴⁷ So, when anything participates in the ideas in God's intellect, they do participate in God's essence. Thus, Brock's argument for the proposition that Aquinas does not attribute the doctrine of participation to Aristotle fails.

Let us now consider the second instance where Aquinas attributes the doctrine of participation to Aristotle. In contrast to his implicit use of participation to explain the content of God's thought in Aristotle's *MP*, Aquinas explicitly uses participation to solve an apparent contradiction in Aristotle's account of perfect happiness in the *NE*. In *NE* 10.7.8, Aristotle writes that the life of wisdom and contemplation is

stronger than the human life, for this life will not be lived in virtue of being a human but in virtue of something divine in the human.... If, therefore, the intellect is divine in comparison with the human, the life according to this is divine in comparison to the human life.⁴⁸

Yet, only several lines after stating that the intellect and the life of contemplation surpass the human and are divine, Aristotle seems to contradict himself:

It would seem that the [intellect] is each, if indeed it is the authoritative and better part.... that which is proper to each nature is the strongest and most pleasant thing for each, and this is the life according to the intellect for the human, if indeed this is most of all the human.⁴⁹

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- 43 ST 1 q. 3.
 44 ScG 3.45.3.
 45 ST 1 q. 14 a. 2 resp.; *Comp. The.* c. 1.31; ScG 3.46.3.
 46 ST 1 q. 15 a. 1 ad. 3: Deus secundum essentiam suam est similitudo omnium rerum. Unde idea in Deo nihil est aliud quam Dei essentia.
 47 ST 1 q. 15 a. 2 resp.
 48 NE 10.7.1177b26-31: ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος ἂν εἴη βίος κρείττων ἢ κατ' ἄνθρωπον· οὐ γὰρ ἢ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν οὕτω βιώσεται, ἀλλ' ἢ θεῖόν τι ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπάρχει.... εἰ δὴ θεῖον ὁ νοῦς πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ὁ κατὰ τοῦτον βίος θεῖος πρὸς τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον.
 49 NE 10.7.1178a2-8: δόξειε δ' ἂν καὶ εἶναι ἕκαστος τοῦτο, εἴτερον

So, how can the intellect be divine and beyond the human yet also be most of all the human? In his commentary on Book 10 of the *NE*, Aquinas resolves this difficulty with the notion of participation.⁵⁰ Commenting on the first of the two passages quoted above, Aquinas writes,

And for this reason, explaining what was said, he added that a human living in this way, having leisure for contemplation, does not live according to what is human, who is composed from diverse things, but according to something divine existing in him, insofar as he participates in a likeness of the divine intellect.⁵¹

The intellect can be divine yet most of all human since the human participates in the divine intellect, and therefore God and the human possess intellect in different ways.⁵² A passage from Aquinas' commentary on *MP* 1.6, in which he explains the doctrine of participation, helps us distinguish in which ways God and the human possess intellect. Aquinas writes, "For what is totally something does not participate in it but is the same as it essentially. However, what is not something totally, having something other added, is properly said to participate that thing."⁵³ Therefore, God does not possess intellect; rather, God is totally intellect. In other words, God is His essence which

τὸ κύριον καὶ ἄμεινον.... τὸ γὰρ οἰκεῖον ἐκάστῳ τῇ φύσει κράτιστον καὶ ἡδιστόν ἐστιν ἐκάστῳ· καὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ δὴ ὁ κατὰ τὸν νοῦν βίος, εἴπερ τοῦτο μάλιστα ἀνθρώπος.

50 Hankey, "*Complectitur Omnem*," 194-5.

51 *SLE* 10 lect. 11 lines 94-99: Et ideo manifestans quod dictum est, subdit quod homo sic vivens, scilicet vacando contemplationi, non vivit secundum quod homo, qui est compositus ex diversis, sed secundum quod aliquid divinum in ipso existit, prout scilicet secundum intellectum divinum similitudinem participat. Aquinas also uses participation to explicate Aristotle's text in *SLE* lect. 11 n. 2105. See Hankey, "Placing the Human," 18-20.

52 The way in which human intellect participates in the divine intellect by nature is called the agent intellect. However, Aquinas distinguishes three more ways in which the human intellect can participate in the divine intellect: through the light of grace, the light of glory, and the light of glory in rapture (*ST* 1 q. 12 a. 2 resp.; *ST* 2a2ae q. 175 a. 3 resp.).

53 *In Metaph.* 1 lect. 10 n. 154: Quod enim totaliter est aliquid, non participat illud, sed est per essentiam idem illi. Quod vero non totaliter est aliquid habens aliquid aliud adiunctum, proprie participare dicitur.

is intellect.⁵⁴ In contrast, the human is partially intellect since although a human's essence is intellect, the human is not his or her essence, for, as Aquinas comments in the passage above, the human is "composed of diverse things" (the soul and the body).

Thus, Aquinas explicitly uses the doctrine of participation to resolve a difficulty in *NE* 10.7: the intellect is divine and yet human in that God is totally intellect whereas the human is only partially intellect and participates in it. So, this is a second instance in which Aquinas attributes the notion of participation to Aristotle.

Before I move on to suggest where Aquinas may have found participation in Aristotle's philosophy, I want to show that on Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle, Aristotle recognizes that the Platonists can use the doctrine of participation to establish a *pros hen* relation between a Form and its particulars, and I will show this by considering a second objection to the proposition that Aquinas attributes participation to Aristotle. The first objection was that Aquinas does not attribute the technical sense of participation to Aristotle, but I criticized this objection and demonstrated that Aquinas does indeed attribute the technical sense of participation to Aristotle in his commentary on *MP* 12.9. My response to the first objection leads to the second objection, which runs like this: in *MP* 1.6.987b10-14, Aristotle explicitly criticizes Plato's doctrine of participation since Plato did not analyze what it means (a criticism which I pointed out in section II). Now, since Aquinas would not have attributed to Aristotle a doctrine that Aristotle clearly rejects, he does not attribute participation to Aristotle. Let us give two responses to this objection, both of which aim to show that Aquinas does not think that Aristotle rejects the doctrine of participation.

Firstly, we can respond by appealing to Aquinas' commentary on *MP* 1.6.987b10-14. Aquinas writes that "although the Pythagoreans posited participation or imitation, they did not investigate how a common species is participated or imitated by sensible individuals; [however], the Platonists taught how."⁵⁵ It

54 *ST* 1 q. 3 a. 3 resp.; *ScG* 3.45.3.

55 *In Metaph.* 1 lect. 10 n. 156: Pythagorici, licet ponent participationem, aut imitationem, non tamen perscrutati sunt qualiter species communis participetur ab individuus sensibilibus, sive ab eis imitetur, quod Platonici tradiderunt.

appears, then, that, as Geiger notes, Aquinas restricts Aristotle's criticism that the terms "participation" and "imitation" were not defined to the Pythagoreans.⁵⁶ Thus, Aquinas sees Aristotle's criticism of participation in this passage as a criticism of inadequate accounts of participation and not necessarily as a rejection of either the existence of or all accounts of participation.

Secondly, on Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle's TMA in *MP* 1.9.990b34-991a8, Aristotle recognizes that the proponents of the Forms can overcome the TMA with the notion of *pros hen* homonymy, as Ward also argues (see section II). In this passage, Aristotle criticizes the doctrine of the Forms with this dilemma: "If the Form of the Ideas and of the things participating in them is the same, then there is something in common...but if they do not have the same Form, they would be homonyms, as if one called both Callias and a piece of wood "man" while considering nothing in common between them."⁵⁷ This dilemma assumes that the Ideas and the things participating in them, the particulars, either have a common Form or a completely different Form. In both cases, an undesirable result follows. If the Ideas and the particulars have a common form, then the TMA follows. Since we discussed how the TMA follows from this assumption in section II, we will not draw out the logic here. On the other hand, if the Forms of an Idea and its particulars share the same name but have nothing else in common, then the Idea cannot explain the very thing it is invoked to explain, namely, how many particulars share a common characteristic. For an Idea can account for the fact that many particulars share the same characteristic only if it has the same nature as the particulars.

On Aquinas' interpretation of this passage, Aristotle knows that his dilemma is a false dilemma; in other words, Aristotle recognizes that there is a third alternative. Aquinas chooses for comment the qualification that Aristotle adds to the second

56 Geiger, *La participation*, 9.

57 *MP* 1.9.990b34-991a8: και ει μὲν ταὐτὸ εἶδος τῶν ιδεῶν καὶ τῶν μετεχόντων, ἔσται τι κοινόν...εἰ δὲ μὴ τὸ αὐτὸ εἶδος, ὁμώνυμα ἂν εἶη, καὶ ὅμοιον ὥσπερ ἂν εἶ τις καλοῖ ἄνθρωπον τὸν τε Καλλιᾶν καὶ τὸ ξύλον, μηδεμίαν κοινωνίαν ἐπιβλέψας αὐτῶν.

conditional of the dilemma, namely, that the homonyms in question share “nothing in common between them” (and so they may be called pure homonyms). On Aquinas’ view,

Aristotle adds this since one can say that some name predicated of an idea and sensible substances is not in all ways equivocal since a name is predicated of an idea essentially but concerning a sensible substance by participation....However, such an equivocation is not pure, but a name that is predicated by participation is said in respect to that (*per respectum ad illud*) which is predicated through itself; that is not pure equivocation but the multiplicity of analogy.⁵⁸

On Aquinas’ interpretation, Aristotle recognizes that a name predicated of an Idea and its particulars is not predicated as a pure homonym; rather, the name is predicated of the particulars by participation and is said in respect to the Idea whose name is predicated essentially. Since the names have a similar but different meaning and are ordered to one another, the names are not purely equivocal but are analogical. In Aquinas’ terminology, “analogy” refers to Aristotle’s concept of *pros hen* homonymy,⁵⁹ and so, on Aquinas’ interpretation, Aristotle recognizes that a term predicated of an Idea and a particular can be a *pros hen* homonym.

Now, this third alternative that, on Aquinas’ interpretation, Aristotle recognizes allows the Platonists to overcome the TMA. For, as we saw in section II, the TMA depends on the position that a term is predicated univocally of an Idea and its particulars. However, on Aquinas’ interpretation, Aristotle recognizes that a term can be predicated of an Idea and its particulars not univocally but as a *pros hen* homonym. Thus, the TMA fails. Furthermore, on Aquinas’ interpretation, since it is participation that orders the

⁵⁸ *In Metaph.* 1 lect. 14 n. 224: Hoc autem ideo addidit Aristoteles quia posset aliquis dicere quod non omnino aequivoce aliquod nomen praedicatur de idea et de substantia sensibili, cum de idea praedicatur essentialiter, de substantia vero sensibili per participationem.... Sed tamen talis aequivocatio non est pura; sed nomen quod per participationem praedicatur, dicitur per respectum ad illud quod praedicatur per se, quod non est pura aequivocatio, sed multiplicitas analogiae.

⁵⁹ Montagnes, *The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being*, 28-30. Aquinas also applies the term “analogy” to two other concepts, which Bernard Montagnes calls the analogy of proportion and the analogy of proportionality. For a treatment of these see *ibid.*, 69-75; Porro, *Thomas Aquinas*, 34-38.

particulars to their Ideas and is the reason why particulars are named after their Ideas, Aristotle recognizes that participation is the cause of the *pros hen* relation between particulars and their Ideas.

Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle's dilemma in *MP* 1.9.990b34-991a8 and, specifically, that Aquinas holds that Aristotle recognizes that the Platonists can use participation to both establish a *pros hen* relationship and overcome the TMA, further supports the fact that Aquinas believes that Aristotle holds that the Platonists analyzed the notion of participation. Thus, on Aquinas' interpretation, Aristotle does not reject the Platonic account of participation when he rejects the Pythagorean account of imitation and inadequate accounts of participation in *MP* 1.6.987b10-14 and 1.9.991a21-22. In this regard, then, Aquinas falls within the Neoplatonic tradition, for the Neoplatonists "did not take the rejection of Forms by Aristotle at face value"; rather, they tried to harmonize Plato and Aristotle.⁶⁰

IV. AN EXPLANATION OF AQUINAS' ATTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATION TO ARISTOTLE

Now that we have seen that Aristotle is critical of the doctrines of the Forms and participation but also that Aquinas nonetheless attributes participation to Aristotle in his commentaries on the *MP* and *NE*, I will suggest where in Aristotle's philosophy Aquinas may have found participation. I argue that Aquinas finds the doctrine of participation in Aristotle's notion of *pros hen* homonymy.

Before I state my argument, let me clarify some terms. Aquinas adopts Aristotle's doctrine of *pros hen* homonymy and calls it analogy, which scholars divide into two types: predicamental analogy and transcendental analogy. Predicamental analogy is the unity among the meanings of the term "being" that is created by relating the accidental senses of being to substance, the primary sense of being. Transcendental analogy, in turn, is the unity among the various types of substances that is created by relating these substances to God, the primary sense of substance and, consequently, of being.⁶¹ So, my argument is this: Aquinas finds the

60 Gerson, *Aristotle and Other Platonists*, 209, 226-228.

61 Montagnes, *The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being*, 28-34; Wippel, *The*

doctrine of participation in Aristotle's notion of *pros hen* homonymy because (i) Aquinas' doctrine of transcendental analogy unites the various senses of substance by relating creatures to God through participation,⁶² and (ii) Aristotle uses *pros hen* homonymy to unite the various senses of substance to God as well. Thus, since we have shown in section III that Aquinas maintains both (iii) that Aristotle believes that participation may unite the terms of a *pros hen* homonym for the Platonists and (iv) that Aristotle does not completely reject participation but only criticizes inadequate versions of it, he could infer that (v) Aristotle unites substances to God through participation. First, let us consider Aristotle's doctrine of *pros hen* homonymy, which he uses to explain the unity of the categories of being. Then, I will argue for premises (i) and (ii).

Let us consider Aristotle's notion of *pros hen* homonymy through his argument for the proposition that the science of being is one and united. The opposing position to this is rooted in the distinction that Aristotle makes between two types of predication in the *Categories*: univocal predication and homonymous predication. A term is univocally predicated of two things if the definitions of the term in both cases are the same, whereas a term is homonymously predicated if the definition of the term in one case is different from the definition in the other case (*Cat.* 1). Now, predicating a term univocally of the objects one wishes to study appears to be a necessary condition of a united and single science.⁶³ However, this condition creates a problem for metaphysics, the study of being *qua* being, for the predicate "being" is said in many ways (homonymously), and therefore it appears that there can be no single science of being. In *MP* 4.1, Aristotle solves this problem by distinguishing a third type of predication from the first two, namely, *pros hen* homonymy:

Being is said in many ways, but in relation to one thing and some one nature, and not homonymously.... The study of one science is not only of things said according to one thing but

Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas, 65-93.

62 Montagnes, *The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being*, 34-43.

63 Shields, *Order in Multiplicity*, 70-72. Cf. *APo.* 77a5-9.

also of things said in relation to one nature, for these things are also said in a certain way according to one thing.... In each [science], knowledge is principally of what is first, and on which the others depend, and on account of which they are named.⁶⁴

Aristotle's solution to the apparent disorder of being is that although being is not united through univocal predication, there can still be a single science of being since all of the homonyms of being are united by being defined in relation to one (*pros hen*) of the senses of being, namely, substance. Thus, being is not merely homonymous; it is a *pros hen* homonym.

In general, the primary sense of a *pros hen* homonym is the sense in relation to which the others are defined, and I will adopt Christopher Shield's terminology of referring to this primary sense as the core-homonym of the term and of referring to other senses as non-core homonyms.⁶⁵ In the case of being, then, substance is the core-homonym, and the other senses of being (quality, quantity, etc.) are non-core homonyms. Again, in general, a non-core homonym is defined in relation to a core-homonym if the core-homonym is included in its definition along with some relation between the non-core homonym and the core-homonym. For example, in the case of being, Aristotle writes that "some things are said to be since they are affections of substance, others are a process towards substance, or destructions, or privations...of substance."⁶⁶

64 MP 4.1.1003a33-b19: Τὸ δὲ ὄν λέγεται μὲν πολλαχῶς, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἓν καὶ μίαν τινὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐχ ὁμωνύμως.... οὐ γὰρ μόνον τῶν καθ' ἓν λεγομένων ἐπιστήμης ἐστὶ θεωρησαὶ μίαν ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν πρὸς μίαν λεγομένων φύσιν· καὶ γὰρ ταῦτα τρόπον τινὰ λέγονται καθ' ἓν...πανταχοῦ δὲ κυρίως τοῦ πρώτου ἢ ἐπιστήμη, καὶ ἐξ οὗ τὰ ἄλλα ἡρτηται, καὶ δι' ὃ λέγονται.

65 Shields, *Order in Multiplicity*, 103-130. G.E.L. Owen refers to the core-homonym of a term as the "focal meaning"; however, this terminology has implications that I wish to avoid. Owen maintains that for Aristotle the aim of metaphysics is to clarify the ambiguities of terms, and so *pros hen* homonymy is simply a way of relating different *senses* of a term together in the conceptual sphere. I do not follow Owen here; rather, I follow Kyle Fraser's interpretation in which the definitions of these different senses of being refer to the essences of objective entities and not simply to the meanings of our words (Owen, "Logic and Metaphysics in Some Earlier Works of Aristotle," 13-32; Fraser, "A Response to The Analytical Reconstruction of Aristotelian Ontology," 51-70).

66 MP 4.1.1003b6-10: τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὅτι οὐσίαι, ὄντα λέγεται, τὰ δ' ὅτι πάθη οὐσίας, τὰ δ' ὅτι ὁδὸς εἰς οὐσίαν ἢ φθοραὶ ἢ στερήσεις ἢ ... οὐσίας. Note, Fraser argues that the categories are not only related according to *pros hen* homonymy but that there is also a serial ordering, an ordering according

As I mentioned above, Aquinas adopts Aristotle's doctrine of *pros hen* homonymy to both unite various senses of being to substance, which we can refer to as predicamental analogy, and various senses of substance to God, which we can refer to as transcendental analogy. My purpose here is to focus on Aquinas' latter use of *pros hen* homonymy and, in particular, to argue that he uses participation to establish the unity of *pros hen* homonyms that are predicated in common of God and creatures.

Let us begin with Aquinas' demonstration that names are predicated analogously of God and creatures. For Aquinas, a word is a sign of an idea, and an idea is a conception in the intellect that is a likeness of a thing itself. Therefore, humans can name something only insofar as they understand it. Since humans cannot understand God's essence in this life, they cannot name God in a way that signifies His essence.⁶⁷ However, the human intellect obtains partial knowledge of God's substance from knowing the essence or perfection of creatures insofar as each creature's perfection is like God. Therefore, humans can name God with names that indicate perfections in creatures.⁶⁸

For Aquinas, a name may be predicated of two things either univocally, equivocally, or analogously. So, in what way is one name predicated of God and creatures? To answer this question, Aquinas uses a process of elimination: names predicated in common of creatures and God are neither predicated univocally nor equivocally, and so they must be predicated analogously.⁶⁹ Let us consider two arguments that Aquinas makes against the position that names are predicated equivocally of God and creatures to show that transcendental analogy relies on the doctrine of participation.

to priority and posteriority, among the terms. This serial ordering is based on the relation of inherence, and this means that the posterior terms inhere in the primary terms. Thus, in one version of this interpretation, quality inheres in quantity, and quantity inheres in the primary category, substance (Fraser "Seriality and Demonstration in Aristotle's Ontology," 131-158).

67 ST 1 q. 13 a. 1.

68 ST 1 q. 13 a. 2.

69 ST 1 q. 13 a. 5 resp.; ScG 1.34.1; *Comp. The.* c. 1.27; *De Pot.* 7 a. 7 resp.

First, Aquinas argues that the names predicated in common of God and creatures are not purely equivocal, for none of the senses of an equivocal term are said in reference to another sense of that equivocal term, but the names predicated of God and creatures do possess such an order: the senses of these common terms are related through efficient causality, which orders what is caused to its cause.⁷⁰ The second argument against equivocal predication, which is similar to the first, runs like this: purely equivocal names only possess unity in name, but there is no likeness among *the things* themselves. Yet the relation of efficient causality obtains between God and creatures, and since the agent always makes something similar to itself, creatures must be in some way truly like God. Therefore, the names predicated of God and creatures cannot be purely equivocal.⁷¹

The aspect of these two arguments which shows that Aquinas' doctrine of transcendental analogy relies on participation is that the analogical unity which exists among the terms predicated in common of God and creatures is established by the real likeness relationship between God and creatures that efficient causality creates. In other words, we can truly signify something about God using terms that point to attributes in creatures since God is the cause of creatures, and therefore He imprints a likeness, even if imperfect, of Himself on them. Therefore, since God's effects participate in Him through this hierarchy of likenesses, as we saw in section III, participation is the real relation that establishes the analogical unity of a term that is applied to creatures and God.

Let us now return to Aristotle's doctrine of *pros hen* homonymy. My purpose is to argue that Aristotle unites various types of substances to God through *pros hen* homonymy. To this end, I will show that Aristotle uses *pros hen* homonymy in two ways to unite the diverse senses of life. First, I will follow Eli Diamond's argument that Aristotle defines soul as a *pros hen* homonym and that the active thinking found in humans

70 ScG 1.33.2.

71 ScG 1.33.3.

is the core-homonym of soul.⁷² I will argue that Diamond's argument implies that various types of substances are united according to *pros hen* homonymy. Secondly, I will argue that Aristotle also uses the *pros hen* homonym "life" to unite living substances to God's active thinking. Let us begin with the first.

To show that Aristotle unites the various senses of soul to human thought through *pros hen* homonymy, I will show that although Aristotle thinks life is said homonymously, he does not think life is purely homonymous; the senses of life are related to a core term. Then, I will argue that the core-homonym of soul is the active thinking of humans. Let us consider the homonymy of soul through Aristotle's rejection of a univocal definition of the soul in *DA* 2.3. Aristotle writes,

A common account is possible concerning figures, which fits each but is proper to none. Likewise, this is the case with the kinds of soul we have discussed. Thus, it is foolish to seek the common account of these things.... while leaving a [proper] account behind.⁷³

The reason why a common definition of soul fits each type of soul but is proper to none is that "soul" is a homonymous term.⁷⁴ In *DA* 2.1, Aristotle provides a common definition of the soul as "the first actuality of a natural body with organs,"⁷⁵ but he finds it inadequate since soul is the principle (ἀρχή) of life (ἡ ζωή) in a living body (*DA* 2.4), and life is said in many ways: as the capacity for nutrition, sensation, or thought (*DA* 2.2.413a20-b13). Since Aristotle eliminates searching for a common or univocal definition of the soul, we may infer that if the science of soul will be united, he must define soul as a *pros hen* homonym and not simply as a homonym.

72 Diamond, *Mortal Imitations*, 37-42.

73 *DA* 2.3.414b22-28: γένοιτο δ' ἂν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν σχημάτων λόγος κοινός, ὃς ἐφαρμόσει μὲν πᾶσιν, ἴδιος δ' οὐδενός ἔσται σχήματος· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς εἰρημέναις ψυχαῖς. διὸ γελοῖον ζητεῖν τὸν κοινὸν λόγον καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων.... ἀφέντας τὸν τοιοῦτον.

74 *Top.* 6.10.148a23-7.

75 *DA* 2.1.412b5-6: ἐντελέχεια ἢ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ ὁργανικοῦ.

Following his criticism of a common definition of soul, Aristotle identifies the relationship between the various senses of soul, and this relationship allows us to identify the core-homonym of soul. Aristotle writes,

The situation concerning the figures is much the same as that concerning the soul. For the former thing always belongs potentially in what follows concerning both figures and ensouled things, for example the triangle in the quadrilateral, and the nutritive soul in the sensitive.⁷⁶

Diamond explains that the relationship between the types of soul is a hierarchical ordering of means to end in the sense of how the potential is for the actual. The final term in the series, therefore, will be an end for which the lower terms exist and which exists for its own sake. Since, for Aristotle, something is defined in terms of its end (*Meteor.* 390a10-15), the final term in this hierarchy will be the core-homonym of soul.⁷⁷ So, what is this final term and core-homonym of soul? The answer is twofold and depends on whether we restrict our investigation to the soul or broaden it to life. Yet, from another perspective, there is only one answer: the active contemplation of *nous*.

If we restrict our inquiry to the soul, then the final term and core-homonym of soul is the thinking found in humans since the other types of soul are potentialities for thinking and, therefore, are means to thinking. Eli Diamond shows this when he writes of the soul that

each level of actuality is the potentiality for the subsequent actuality...such that the actuality of nutrition is the potentiality of perception, and the actuality of perception is the potentiality of thinking. In this sense, thinking is the actuality of the whole series.⁷⁸

It appears, then, that thinking is the final term of soul. Yet, Aristotle is more precise about the structure of thinking in *DA* 3.3-5; thinking itself is hierarchically structured according to levels of potentiality and actuality. The first potentiality of the intellect is

⁷⁶ *DA* 2.3.414b28-415a3: παραπλησίως δ' ἔχει τῷ περὶ τῶν σχημάτων καὶ τὰ κατὰ ψυχὴν· αἰεὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ ἐφεξῆς ὑπάρχει δυνάμει τὸ πρότερον ἐπὶ τε τῶν σχημάτων καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐμψύχων, οἷον ἐν τετραγώνῳ μὲν τρίγωνον, ἐν αἰσθητικῷ δὲ τὸ θρεπτικόν.

⁷⁷ Diamond, *Mortal Imitations*, 62.

⁷⁸ Diamond, *Mortal Imitations*, 64.

its capacity to learn and to become all things. The first actuality of intellect is its state of having learned and actually become its objects, a state which is simultaneously the potential for thinking the objects it has become. The second actuality of the intellect is the active thinking or contemplation of these objects. Since first potentiality and first actuality thought are potentialities for second actuality thought, the final term of soul and, therefore, the core-homonym of soul is the active thinking found in humans.⁷⁹

This demonstration that “soul” is a *pros hen* homonym implies that living substances are united according to *pros hen* homonymy. For, Aristotle maintains that the soul is categorized as substance since soul is the cause of life in the living body: “Substance is the cause of being for all things, and for living things being is life, and the soul is also the cause and source of life.”⁸⁰ Therefore, since the soul is the substance of the living body, and the types of soul are united according to *pros hen* homonymy, living substances themselves, and not only the categories of being, are united according to *pros hen* homonymy.

Now that we have seen that Aristotle unites various types of living substances through *pros hen* homonymy, my aim is to argue that he also uses *pros hen* homonymy to unite these substances to God. If we broaden our perspective to consider all types of life and not only what is ensouled, the core-homonym and essence of life is not the active thinking found in humans, but, I maintain along with Christopher Shields and Eli Diamond, it is God’s active contemplation, which is God Himself.⁸¹ For, I argue, God’s active thinking is the final term of life since all forms of life stand in a teleological relationship to God’s thinking. Thus, since the final term of life is the core-homonym of life, God’s active thinking is the core-homonym of life.

79 Ibid., 165-9.

80 DA 2.4.415b12-14: τὸ γὰρ αἴτιον τοῦ εἶναι πᾶσιν ἡ οὐσία, τὸ δὲ ζῆν τοῖς ζῶσι τὸ εἶναι ἐστίν, αἰτία δὲ καὶ ἀρχὴ τούτου ἡ ψυχὴ.

81 Shields, *Order in Multiplicity*, 188-191; Diamond, *Mortal Imitations*, 5-6.

To make this argument, I only need to defend the claim that, for Aristotle, all forms of life stand in a teleological relationship to God's thinking since I have already defended the other premises. So, is there textual support for this claim? In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle argues that the primary intelligible is the good by employing two series of contraries, and without going into the details of these series,⁸² we may still understand his general argument. One series, Aristotle writes, is the intelligible, and within this series substance is primary, and within substance, the simple and completely actual substance, God, is primary. Since that which is first in a class is the best, God is the good and the first desirable (*MP* 12.7.1072a26-1072b1). Therefore, since God is active thinking, we may infer that the good is God's active thinking. Now, in *MP* 12.10, Aristotle considers how the good or best is in nature:

whether as something separate and itself by itself, or in the order. Rather, in both ways...all things are ordered together in some way, but not in the same way...and all things are ordered together in relation to one thing (πρὸς μὲν γὰρ ἓν).⁸³

Therefore, since all things are ordered to the good and the best, they are ordered to the active thinking of God as their end. Thus, God is the core-homonym of life, and so Aristotle unites the various types of living substances to God through the doctrine of *pros hen* homonymy.

V. CONCLUSION

Let me finish by summarizing my argument. First, I established the existence of a problem in Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy: although it appears that Aristotle rejects the notion of participation, Aquinas nonetheless uses participation to resolve problems in his commentaries on Aristotle's *MP* and *NE*, and so he attributes the doctrine of participation to Aristotle.

82 For a discussion of these series, see Laks, "*Metaphysics* Λ 7," 224-5.

83 *MP* 12.10.1075a11-19: ... πότερον κερχωρισμένον τι καὶ αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό, ἢ τὴν τάξιν. ἢ ἀμφοτέρως...πάντα δὲ συντέτακται πῶς, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁμοίως.... πρὸς μὲν γὰρ ἓν ἅπαντα συντέτακται Cf. *DA* 2.4.415a28-b2 where Aristotle writes that the activity of each nature is *for the sake of* partaking (μετέχουσιν) in the divine life.

Secondly, I aimed to show where in Aristotle's philosophy Aquinas may have found the doctrine of participation. I pointed to passages in Aquinas' commentary on the *MP* in which he maintains both that (i) Aristotle does not completely reject participation but only criticizes inadequate versions of it and (ii) that Aristotle believes that for the Platonists participation may unite the various senses of a term that Aristotle calls a *pros hen* homonym. I then argued that since Aquinas' doctrine of transcendental analogy uses the doctrine of participation to unite diverse types of substances to its core-homonym, God, Aquinas finds the doctrine of participation in Aristotle's use of *pros hen* homonymy to unite living substances to the core-term of life, God.

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