

# *Human Nature in Theistic Perspective*

*with Celia Deane-Drummond and Paul Wason, "Becoming Human in Theistic Perspective"; John H. Walton, "Human Origins and the Bible"; Mikael Stenmark, "Is There a Human Nature?"; Alan J. Torrance, "Is There a Distinctive Human Nature? Approaching the Question from a Christian Epistemic Base"; Alistair McFadyen, "Imaging God: A Theological Answer to the Anthropological Question?"; Celia Deane-Drummond, "God's Image and Likeness in Humans and Other Animals: Performative Soul-Making and Graced Nature"; and John Schneider, "The Fall of 'Augustinian Adam': Original Fragility and Supralapsarian Purpose"*

## GOD'S IMAGE AND LIKENESS IN HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS: PERFORMATIVE SOUL-MAKING AND GRACED NATURE

*by Celia Deane-Drummond*

*Abstract.* Although official Roman Catholic teaching affirms the concept of evolution as a convincing theory in order to explain the biological origin of different life forms, there is still a strong insistence on an "ontological gap" between human beings and all other creatures. This paper investigates how best to interpret that gap while still affirming human evolution. Drawing on medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas, I seek to uncover the influence of Aristotelian ideas on the rational soul. I will argue for the crucial importance of divine grace in consideration of divine image-bearing so that while other animals share in the likeness of God, only humans, like angels, bear God's image. Such an approach does not provide any justification for the denigration of other creatures. Rather, the possibility of a further transformation of human nature, deification, and thus into the likeness of God depends on Christ as the one who bears the image of God perfectly, and the Spirit, who enables such a transformation in human subjects.

*Keywords:* angels; animals; evolution; graced nature; human distinctiveness; image-bearing; rational soul

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The gradual alignment of the official Roman Catholic Magisterium with evolutionary ideas is well known, culminating perhaps in the plenary address delivered by Pope John Paul II to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences

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in 1996 (John Paul II 1996).<sup>1</sup> However, when it comes to humankind, the pontiff was far more hesitant about attributing evolution to all aspects of human origins so that

we find ourselves in the presence of an ontological difference, an ontological leap. . . . The moment of transition to the spiritual cannot be the object of {scientific} observation. . . . But the experience of metaphysical knowledge, of self-awareness and self-reflection, of moral conscience, freedom, or gain, of aesthetic and religious experience, falls within the competence of philosophical analysis and reflection, while theology brings out its ultimate meaning according to the Creator's plans. (1996, 5)

It is easy to see why such statements have been interpreted by the philosopher Ernan McMullin (2000, 367–93) to mean that the position taken on human nature by the late pontiff is highly dualistic in tone, set up in opposition to the emergentist view of authors such as Arthur Peacocke, who put more emphasis on the evolutionary origin of human beings. The late Polish theologian and archbishop Józef Życiński (2006, 1–7) took a similar stance to McMullin's interpretation of the late pontiff in his claim that proper human dignity is one of clear separation from other animal kinds, rather than their alignment, strongly objecting to the blurring of the line between humans and other animals as amounting to a weakening of human dignity. In this case, worries about the cultural denigration of human beings through what is perceived as an unwarranted charge of "speciesism" by those who campaign for animal rights converges with a similar threat of a weakening of the status of the human through an elevation of evolutionary theories.

The antispeciesist arguments used here by Życiński in opposition to animal liberationist and utilitarian Peter Singer are, I suggest, flawed in that respecting other animals does not necessarily mean that human beings have to be devalued. Peter Singer and other animal campaigners object to human beings just being concerned about their own kind in a one-sided manner that fails to recognize the worth of other creaturely kinds. While the language of "speciesism" is somewhat reactionary, it is easy to understand how an elevation of human dignity when paired with a denigration of other creatures can lead to this conclusion. It is also easy to understand how some scholars have been drawn to resisting the language of image-bearing altogether, on the premise that such language is somehow unhelpful in its tendency to stress differences between humans and other creatures, when what we should be more aware of are commonalities and shared creatureliness.<sup>2</sup> The question that comes to mind then is this: Is there a way of affirming other creatures *and* affirming the evolutionary origins of human beings, while at the same time recognizing that there are important differences between humans and other animals, differences that put human beings in a unique, if not strictly exclusive, relationship with

God? Further, does that uniqueness have implications for human social relationships and responsibilities for each other, and for the natural world and its creaturely kinds?

#### AQUINAS ON DIVINE IMAGE-BEARING

In beginning to address this question, it is worth considering in more detail the work of medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas, whose theology continues to have resonance in works of contemporary theological scholarship. By exploring his theology more fully, we may also begin to appreciate the possible role of philosophical or scientific insights on current theological development. Aquinas understood that other animals possessed some intelligence through the estimative sense and appetitive powers of the soul. However, he rejects the notion that other animals can display the image of God, even though he raises this as a possibility, perhaps ironically, where he writes “It seems that God’s image is to be found in irrational creatures” (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.2). But, following Augustine, he considers the opposite scenario that God’s gift of an intelligent mind in human beings means that whatever lacks intelligence cannot bear God’s image. By *intelligence*, Aquinas means that which distinguishes human reasoning from other animals, rather than distinctions among human beings (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.2, note a).<sup>3</sup>

In the end, he arrives at a compromise that other animals share some *likeness* to God in that they exist and that they are alive, but it is in their capacity for discernment and intelligence that marks out human beings as bearers of the image. This difference reflects what Aquinas terms the greater cognitive capacity for abstract thought and contemplation of the *highest good* in human beings compared with other animals. And it is the likeness “to the supreme wisdom in so far as they are intelligent” that makes humans as intelligent animals capable of bearing God’s image in a way that other animals cannot (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.2).<sup>4</sup> Yet, since wisdom, as he has defined it, is about knowledge of eternal things, it seems that it is the intelligence of human beings as directed toward the capacity for *revealed knowledge* that marks out human image-bearing, rather than simply intellectual capacity. It is very important to note that such capacities to receive revelation are not simply “added” to an otherwise brutish human nature in a dualistic manner; rather, human nature is still creaturely and mortal, but it has the capability of being transformed.

He also considers the possibility that as far as the angels are concerned, they bear the image of God with respect to their intelligence, but because there is what he terms “a certain imitation of God in man,” human beings in a *bodily sense* bear the image more perfectly compared with angels. But this last form of image-bearing he rejects on the grounds that this would

mean “even the animals would be after God’s image,” a view he clearly wishes to reject, preferring the idea that image-bearing is found more in angels than in humanity (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.3). Hence, while he does seem to acknowledge that other animals weakly bear the image of God “in the manner of a trace,” for Aquinas *only* the rational creature that has an intellect or mind is the resemblance sufficient to be termed true bearers of the image of God, and this is such that those areas of human life, such as spiritual, bodily, or imaginative ways of knowing, are only ever capable of bearing a “trace” of the image (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.6).<sup>5</sup>

He also, in a fascinating way that reflects at least in part a common evolutionary understanding of human origins, suggests that one of the prime differences between humans and other animals is their ability to walk upright; so they have “a posture more suited to contemplation of the heavens” (Aquinas *ST*, 13 1a, 93.6). In this way, he concludes that image-bearing in the rational aspect of human nature bears the image of the divine in two ways. First, in relation to the divine nature, “rational creatures seem to achieve some sort of portraiture in kind, in that they imitate God not only in his being and his living but also in his understanding.” Second, in relation to being an image of the uncreated Trinity, the rational creature “exhibits a word procession as regards the intelligence and a love procession as regards the will” (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.6). Other creatures also certainly bear a likeness to God, in having “a certain trace of intelligence that produced them” and “a clue that these realities may exist” when it comes to word and love, in the way that a house shows something of the mind of the architect.

But it is the ability of human beings to *imitate God* in the process of *loving and willing* that marks out divine image-bearing; hence, Aquinas seems to have a view of image-bearing that includes *human agency and action* as well as ontology.<sup>6</sup> A simple focus on reason as the distinction between humans and other animals misses out the specifically religious and what might be termed *performative* elements that are woven into Aquinas’s account of what it means for human beings to bear God’s image.<sup>7</sup> If this interpretation is correct, then it would bear on Aquinas’s view of human beings who are no longer able or who have never been able to reason, as in this case, something akin to the direct knowledge attained by the angels would still be possible. If, on the other hand, we hold to the view that reason as such marks out human image-bearing in an *exclusive* sense, then those who are unable to reason would no longer bear the image of God, but Aquinas rejects this idea. It therefore supports the first view that something of an image remains even where reason is impossible.

We find then that for him, human image-bearing applies even in those who have, in different circumstances, lost their use of reasoning powers,

where “this image of God is so faint—so shadowy, we might say—that it is practically nonexistent, as in those who lack the use of reason; or whether it is dim and disfigured, as in sinners, or whether it is bright and beautiful, as in the just, as Augustine says” (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.8). In the light of contemporary discussion about the place of the most vulnerable human beings in society who no longer have reasoning or active powers, we might want to push this idea even further than Aquinas does and suggest that it is when human beings are at their most vulnerable that the veiled grace of God in image-bearing becomes most visible. But a closely related discussion to that of image-bearing is that of the soul, and it is therefore instructive to consider first how Aquinas portrayed human rational souls compared with the sensitive souls of other animals.

#### ARISTOTLE ON THE RATIONAL SOUL

Aquinas followed Aristotle in believing that all living things have a soul, and he rejects the idea that the soul is simply a vital principle or that it is corporeal as such; rather, it is “that which actuates a body” (Aquinas, *ST*, 11, 1a, 75–83). In Aquinas’ thought, the distinctive aspect of the human soul relates to the mind or intellect, and he presumed in this case that the body had no “intrinsic part” in the activity of understanding in humans, and therefore it is able to subsist and can be thought of as *incorporeal*, even if the body is the means through which the soul of a human being comes to be embodied (Aquinas, *ST*, 11, 1a, 75.2).<sup>8</sup> Aquinas aligns himself with Aristotle in naming the active intellect as a component of a human soul that has the possibility of immortality and separability and what he terms the “sensitive soul” of other animals as corporeal, acting according to desires or appetites, rather than according to the reasoning ability of human beings (Aquinas, *ST*, 11, 1a, 75.4).<sup>9</sup>

Yet, it is important to point out that in Aristotle’s thought, the functional properties of each level of life are thought of as *incorporated into* the next level of life, according to what might be thought of as a nested hierarchy beginning with plants, then other animals, and then humans. The difficulty comes when Aristotelian thought is combined with Platonic sources in Hellenistic and Arab texts so that the notion of three different kinds of *psyche*—namely, vegetative, animate, and rational—also come to the surface in Aquinas’s account.<sup>10</sup> Aristotle’s thesis on the *History of Animals* that dealt with what makes different animals distinct is worth noting in this context, since his distinguishing features for each kind were not so much a natural history of that kind but a way of analyzing differences or *differentiae* among living things. It is incorrect to view Aristotle here as trying to construct some sort of classification system for different animals according to their natural history. His observations, though detailed, are intended to serve philosophical and analytical purposes. The *scala naturae* in *History of*

*Animals* VII (VIII) 588b4<sup>11</sup> is not a natural history but serves an analytical purpose (Gotthelf 1991, 8). His *scala naturae* is portrayed so that there are continuities between the different levels, so “Nature proceeds from the inanimate to the animals by such small steps that, because of the continuity, we fail to see to which side the boundary and the middle between them belongs.” He is not denying there is a boundary, but suggesting that it is hard to see it (Aristotle 1991, *HA*, VII (VIII), 588b).

When it comes to the difference between other animals and humans, he suggests that some characteristics are “more or less” evident in other animals compared with humans, such as courage/cowardice; tameness/wildness; fear/boldness; and temper/mischievousness. But other differences cannot be compared in this way; rather, they are more like *analogies* compared with human beings, and analogous characteristics relate to art, intelligence, and wisdom, where “certain animals possess another natural capability of a similar sort” (Aristotle 1991, *HA*, VII (VIII), 588a). In other words, such characteristics are expressed in *analogous* ways, but have different *origins*. Here, he comments that the soul of children “has practically no difference from that of wild animals” (Aristotle 1991, *HA*, VII (VIII), 588a).

Plato, by contrast, stressed the very different kinds of soul between plants, animals, and humans that preexisted in immaterial ideas, thus leading to a strong sense of ontological discontinuity. The tension between human continuity with other animals or a sharp ontological gap is therefore not a contemporary problem but goes back to the philosophical approaches taken by Aristotle and Plato. But how far was Aquinas influenced by Plato or Aristotle in coming up with his portrayal of the human soul? In order to probe this question more fully, his commentary on Aristotle’s treatise on the human soul, *de Anima*, may give some very interesting clues.

Aquinas’s commentary shows that he understood Aristotle’s argument for different powers or parts of the soul in terms of nutritional, sensory, appetitive, capacity for motion, and intellective, where humans have all such powers, and other living things only have some (Aquinas, *CDA*, Book II, 5, 25–34). What is interesting here is that he includes a discussion of humans in the category of “lower living things,” by which he excludes those without a material side, such as angels (Aquinas, *CDA*, Book II, 5, 55–70). In these lower orders of living beings, including humans and other creatures, we find material being and immaterial being. Immaterial being has two levels: that which is intelligible, which “is thoroughly immaterial: for in intellect things have being both without matter and without the individuating conditions of matter,” and that which is sensible, “is halfway between,” as the senses themselves are “without matter,” yet have “matter’s individuating conditions” and “a bodily organ” (Aquinas, *CDA*, Book II, 5, 70–83). Aquinas was incorrect, of course, in the light of contemporary knowledge of cognition to think of intelligibility as being immaterial, but what is of interest is the way he positions sensible creatures as *also* displaying

a measure of immateriality, but not to the same extent as intelligibility, that has the power to universalize.

Aquinas solves the problem of the Aristotelian introduction of appetitive powers and capacity for motion by suggesting that these are added to the basic triple powers of the soul as nutritive, sensitive, and rational. He is clear that when speaking of a rational soul, it is understood, at least in human beings, to be *inclusive* of all the other powers common to plants and other animals; in other words, it *incorporates* rather than is totally different from those souls in other “lower living things” (Aquinas, *CDA*, Book II, 6, 58–63). He also explicitly states that such powers are *necessary* for the intellect, so “in mortal beings that have intellect, all the other [powers] necessarily exist beforehand, like underpinnings of some kind, preparing the way for intellect, which is the ultimate perfection aimed at in the operation of nature” (Aquinas, *CDA*, Book II, 6, 64–74).

However, the operations of the rational side are different in human beings as much as he considered that they were incorporeal. He also believed that sensation could not be true or false or deceived in the manner that was the case for cognition; therefore, rationality could not be a type of sensation (Aquinas, *CDA*, Book III, 4, 199–215). Of course, he did not consider that intellect was somehow *separated off* from the rest of human nature in a dualistic ontology; rather, cognition happens in a way that is particular to human beings, both first in terms of receiving that which is intelligible through intellect, and second, through agency, which relates to the power of abstraction (Aquinas, *CDA*, Book III, 10, 101–106). In commenting on Aristotle’s view developed in Book III that the intellective power of the soul is “everlasting” and “imperishable,” Aquinas understands “everlasting” to mean that which *always will be*, rather than that *which was always so*; therefore, unlike Plato, “a form never exists before its matter, but soul remains after its matter—‘not all of it, but intellect’” (Aquinas, *CDA*, Book III, 10, 202–220). Yet, the kind of intellectual soul that remains in Aristotle’s view is one that cannot share in the soul’s affections, and that part of the intellect that can is perishable.<sup>12</sup> But the fact that Aquinas approves of an Aristotelian understanding of the soul as immaterial, in an *eschatological* rather than preexistent sense, is important, since it rejects the idea of preexistent souls.

#### THE NATURE OF GRACE

Aquinas’s belief, mentioned above, that young children also possess the image of God might be viewed as rather more affirming of their human dignity when compared with Aristotle, though clearly Aquinas also held to a graded scale of the visibility of that image-bearing. Aquinas’s view can be rescued, however, by considering the prime importance of grace in the human life that is not necessarily constricted to those with specific

reasoning powers, even though somewhat unfortunately he seemed to suggest that men were rather more advanced in their image-bearing compared with women due to his perception that men had higher capacities to receive God's grace.<sup>13</sup> Image-bearing in an ontological sense is more about potentiality rather than a description of what might be possible in religious terms. If the capacity for religious belief is also one that has evolved, once human brains reached a certain size and once social communities were sufficiently sophisticated (Dunbar 2008, 403–423), what is the relationship between evolution and image-bearing?

Berry identifies *Homo divinis* with divine image-bearing, arguing that God intervenes in human evolution in order to make this possible. However, it seems to me that there is no reason why we have to consider God “intervening” at this stage in history in a specifically direct way any more than any other stage in history (Berry 2012; Deane-Drummond 2012b). At the same time, that does not mean that there is no relationship between nature and grace, for we can conceive of human beings as having evolved in such a way so as to make the specific graceful action of God possible. Precisely how this might happen is the topic of intense scientific research; that is, in what sense is religion an evolved capacity? Different possibilities include religious belief either as an adaptation, which implies a specific “hard-wired” tendency to be religious, perhaps in association with cooperative abilities, or as adaptive—that is, a pattern of behavior that promotes fitness but one that is not specifically hard-wired. If the former, it is not clear when this might have taken place—for example, whether it was coincident with high levels of cognitive intention. None of these results can be used in a valid sense to *explain religion away*; what they might do at best is to show how human brains are primed in order to be most responsive to a range of religious ideas rather than the proof or otherwise of such ideas. Their explanatory powers are, in other words, rather more sophisticated versions of psychology of religion arguments characteristic of the last century. Whether the primary shift in human evolution was in cognition, culture, or cooperation is still a matter of debate, but many now argue for cultural changes taking place prior to cognitive ones (Barrett 2011, 205–224; Wilson 2011, 133–139). Further, developmental biologists are now beginning to resist the idea of “innate” or “hard-wired” genetic characteristics, due to the extent to which genetic processes are regulated and respond to environmental cues; hence, a given characteristic may or may not develop “robust” forms of inheritance (Bateson and Gluckman 2011).

If we link higher reasoning and capacity for religion with image-bearing, then precisely *when* that divine image-bearing happened in the course of evolutionary history remains at best highly speculative. Do we associate this, for example, with the appearance of advanced cognitive capacities and religious belief in earlier hominids? More recent research,

for example, suggests that Neanderthals were much more intelligent than previously thought and that they were capable of high levels of intention, including symbolic thinking and religious practice (Zilhao 2011, 111–131). Zilhao suggests that language and symbolic thinking were also present in Neanderthals so that the relative late appearance of external markers for body ornamentation in human populations reflects the greater complexity of social networks, and thus, the need for more complex external signals. Pettitt also develops this idea by mapping Dunbar's levels of intention onto the burial practices of different hominid groups; here, *Homo neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens* are capable of a fourth level of intentionality, while *Homo erectus* and *Homo heidelbergensis* are only capable of three levels (Pettitt 2011, 161). If this research is proved correct, then this implies that Neanderthals could be worthy recipients of *imago Dei*. There are also ongoing discussions as to why Neanderthals died out, and an intriguing theory is that there were simply assimilated into human populations (Zilhao 2011).

Ian Tattersall is much more skeptical about commonalities between *H. sapiens* and *H. neanderthalensis*, arguing that there are highly significant differences in anatomy, and Neanderthal tool use was relatively unsophisticated. Any possible exchange of genetic information reflects sporadic liaisons (“hanky panky”) that are not particularly significant (Tattersall 2012, 168). However, he does concede that there have been relatively recent discoveries of *H. sapiens* burials with other Aterian hominids that seem to have common cultural characteristics, so in this case some intermixing may have occurred. What is really fascinating is that more advanced forms of abstract reasoning and symbol formation do not seem to be a characteristic of *H. sapiens* from the beginning (Tattersall 2012, 188–193). Tattersall argues that all that was needed for such reasoning powers was latent in the genetic makeup from the first appearance of *H. sapiens*, but it took considerable time to be expressed in a population (2012, 213).

If religion only appeared later in the course of evolution of *H. sapiens* once symbolic capacity had appeared, does that mean that historically many members of our own species are *de facto* excluded from image-bearing? Or is any view that draws on essential aspects of human nature always misguided? Of course, divine providence suggests that in one sense, the whole of the natural world can be thought of as in a loving relationship with God, where the work of the Holy Spirit is present to the dynamic, living creaturely world in which we live. But when theologians speak of “a life of grace,” they normally mean a special receptivity to God the Holy Spirit in those creatures that bear the image of God—that is, in the human community.

Aquinas had something important to say about the relationship between nature and grace, specifically in relation to image-bearing. He proposed that God's image in men should be considered as operative in three stages.<sup>14</sup> The first, which is common to all people, reflects the fact that human

beings have “a natural aptitude for knowing and loving God, an aptitude which consists in the very nature of the mind” (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.4). In one sense, I could argue that all members of *H. sapiens* share in this capacity, even if it took many years for its full potential to be realized in an outpouring of creativity and symbolic powers. But this is only the basic sense in which humans bear the image through reasoning powers, and it could be said that inasmuch as other animals, including other hominids, in some sense partially share in image-bearing, then they would do so as far as that reasonable capacity is shared. However, he also argues that a second stage is an actual or dispositive attitude of knowing and loving God, but such love is imperfect, and where it exists, it exists in those who are just, and it comes by “conformity to grace.” It is therefore a movement in response to the gracious activity of God. The third stage is knowing and loving God perfectly, and “this is the image by likeness of glory,” here we find those who are not simply *just*, but “*blessed*,” again, implying a superlative action of God’s grace (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.4). This graceful action of God does not work *against* nature, nor is it *added* onto nature, but serves to *transform* it. The distinction between men and women that is then elaborated is not made on the basis of any supposedly superior powers of reasoning in men, but on the basis of differences in the *second* and *third* stages—that is, the capacity to love God in a graced-filled way. This is drawn from Aquinas’s literal reading of Genesis that suggests women were created from men, from which he concludes that *only men* are capable of entering into image-bearing in a perfected way. While clearly sexist by contemporary standards, this is in tension with any interpretation of his view of image-bearing as exclusively related to intelligent reasoning, for such an interpretation would necessarily restrict image-bearing to the first stage. He does, nonetheless, argue against the idea that the image of God is somehow analogous to sexual distinctions; rather, “the image of God is common to both sexes, being in the mind which has no distinction of sex” (Aquinas, *ST*, 13, 1a, 93.6).<sup>15</sup> It is, however, consistent with the view proposed here—namely, that there is far more to image-bearing in Aquinas than simple reasoning powers; hence, while it builds on those powers, its goal and orientation are primarily about perfecting the human abilities to know and love God, which is received in those who act justly and are blessed by God.

It would be wrong, however, to consider the value of other animals, including other hominids, as simply “reduced humans,” but rather, they are to be respected in their own right for the particular skills that they bring. Given this proviso, it makes sense to explore more fully how human distinctiveness might be characterized through reflection on graced nature in humans. I suggest that a renewed consideration of Christology may help us understand more fully what this relationship between nature and grace might mean when considering the divine image in human beings.<sup>16</sup> In his

discussion of Christology, Aquinas presents the difference between image-bearing in human beings and image-bearing in Christ in a striking way:

The image of one thing is present in another in one of two ways. The first, as in a being of the same specific nature, e.g., the king's image in his son; the second, as in a being of a different nature, e.g., the king's image on a coin. The Son is the Image of the Father in the first manner; man is the image of God in the second. (Aquinas, *ST*, 7, 1a, 35.2)

According to Aquinas, only in humanity “there is a kind of process tending toward completion” (Aquinas, *ST*, 7, 1a, 35.2). He develops this idea further in the third part of the *Summa*, where he addresses the childhood of Christ. Here, he suggests that for human beings, the likeness to God is always going to be imperfect, both in the sense of being “created in the image of God” and “recreated in the likeness of grace” (Aquinas, *ST*, 52, 3a, 32.3). In both senses, he suggests that we become “sons of God.” However, this is never the same as the profound and perfected sense of sonship that is worthy only of Jesus Christ, but not so much by his perfected human nature. In this way, “though in his human nature, he is created and justified, he is not to be called Son of God by reason of creation or justification, but only by reason of his eternal generation whereby he is Son of the Father alone” (Aquinas, *ST*, 52, 3a, 32.3). He therefore distinguishes between the kind of sonship and image of God in Christ that comes from the generation of the Father, and that in human beings, which is a lesser likeness, but “according to the likeness in grace, stems from the action of the whole Trinity” (Aquinas, *ST*, 52, 3a, 32.3). Yet, even though the sonship and therefore likeness to God is different from other human persons, it still sets the standard toward which human beings tend as they move into the third stage of “blessed” existence in God’s grace.

Hence, in order to move from image-bearing as that which is characteristic of all human beings by reason of being human to one that is a more active reflection on what such an image enables, the possibility of a transformative movement toward the image of the Son becomes the goal for the Christian life.<sup>17</sup> I suggest that this also coheres with biblical interpretation of image-bearing as a reflection on the priestly role of human beings that seems to follow from exegetical analysis of the Genesis text (Walton 2012). Such a goal is achieved through what might be termed a Trinitarian act so that while the image of God in humanity is properly speaking an image of the Trinity, the one to whom we look for a perfected image of God is Christ. Paradoxically, perhaps, in the life of virtue, this goal is not achieved necessarily through spectacular displays of advanced reasoning powers, but through identification with Christ in his openness and vulnerability. Theologically, the work of the Holy Spirit experienced as grace works to transform humans into the image of the Son, and that transformation can continue whether we are conscious of it or not. It is one

reason why Aquinas acknowledges that the image of God in human beings is not simply associated with reasoning powers, but with the gracious action of the God, so “thus the image of God is found in the soul according as the soul turns to God, or possesses a nature that enables it to turn to God” (Aquinas, *ST*, 1a, 93.8). Yet, the active reception of the grace of God in the human community aligned with active and free obedience after the pattern of the Son has a specific role in transforming humanity into God’s likeness and preparing human beings for the ultimate goal of the Christian life, the beatific vision. In this case, Aquinas argues that the divine goodness surpasses human capability, and so is received by grace. But this is not a split away from our natural condition, rather, “that a mind should be so uplifted by God is not against nature but above the capacities of nature” (Aquinas, *ST*, 45, 2a–2ae, 175.1).

Such a religious transformation distinguishes humans from other animals, but it does not do so in order to denigrate them, but, if Romans 8 is to be believed, in order to continue to transform the natural world along with human persons. Other animals share in God’s likeness and along with other hominids are important players in the overall evolutionary drama, that is, they are not simply means to generating human beings. Understood in this way, image-bearing is consequent on a gift of higher reasoning and religious powers that have evolved in human beings, but these capacities are present as a means to express an active relationship with God according to the pattern of humble service set forth in Christ. Human responsibility is therefore not simply individualistic, but a shared task to make room for the creatures who share our creaturely home.

## NOTES

This article is a revised and expanded text of a paper presented to a colloquium entitled “Becoming Human in Theistic Perspective” held February 25–29, 2012 at the Omni Amelia Island Resort in Florida. This colloquium was organized by the John Templeton Foundation and held in honor of Owen Gingerich’s 80th birthday. The author is very grateful to the Templeton Foundation and to Paul Wason for the invitation to participate in this event and to colleagues at the event for helpful feedback on the draft submission.

1. In this edition, there was a mistranslation of the French so that evolution was rendered as “more than one hypothesis,” but the French original suggests that it would be better translated as “more than a hypothesis,” by which was meant a stronger case than a merely speculative hypothesis. I have also discussed this extract in Deane-Drummond (2012a).

2. The choice then seems to be to either expand the idea of image-bearing to other creatures or abandon the language of image-bearing altogether and seek other ways of discussing what it means to be human. Fergusson (2013) has interestingly chosen the latter route.

3. Translator’s note: Edmund Hill.

4. I have chosen to reference ancient texts by using an abbreviation of the text itself in the body of my essay, as the date of publication refers to translation and is not meaningful in such contexts.

5. Camosy has argued that other animals need to be included in the category of image-bearing. See, for example, Camosy (2013).

6. Stenmark (2012) has helpfully compared the difference between human nature that is based on natural capacities and that based on relational qualities. He ends up arguing for the

former as a necessary prerequisite for the latter, and so prefers a view of human nature orientated on particular capacities. Torrance (2012), on the other hand, presses for an eschatological and implicitly *relational* view of image-bearing that begins with a portrait of Jesus Christ, which seems to pay little or no attention to natural capacities, and is reliant instead on a direct action of God's grace to redeem a corrupt human nature. My own view presented in this paper is somewhere in between these two alternatives, in that while I argue that natural capacities are important, they are not sufficient for defining either human nature or image-bearing. I used the term "graced nature" to show that grace is not somehow "added" onto nature but, rather, nature is transformed by the action of God's grace.

7. I suggest that this performance element coheres with the idea of human image-bearing reflecting a specific priestly ministry (Walton 2012). It also coheres with McFadyen's (2012) approach to image-bearing, though I am inclined to agree with Stenmark (2012) that relationality presupposes capacities and further that an account of creation does not have to be founded on essentialist or static categories.

8. See also, for example, Aquinas *ST*, 13, 1a, Qu. 90–102, especially 1a, 90.2, where Aquinas speaks of the creation of the rational soul as a direct act of God's creative activity. He also rejects the idea that the rational soul could be the work of angelic forces, since only God can create a soul directly, 1a, 90.3.

9. Compare Aristotle (*DA*, II, 413b, 25), where he speaks here of *nous* and *theoretikos dunameos* as being a "distinct kind (*genos*) of *psuche*" and "it alone admits of being separated, as the immortal from the perishable."

10. I am very grateful to Phillip Sloan for clarifying the discussion in Aristotle and for pointing me to Aristotle, *History of Animals*, VII, 588b, where this is discussed in more detail (Sloan, December 2011, personal communication).

11. A later volume is put in brackets here as there is some uncertainty about the chapter designation from the original text.

12. Aquinas leaves to one side any discussion as to how the intellect might operate in the separated soul; it is cryptically, simply "no part of the present plan," as Aristotle is not a Christian (Aquinas, *CDA*, Book III, 10, 221–49).

13. I have commented on this aspect of Aquinas thought in *Creaturely Theology* (Deane-Drummond 2009a, 190–210). While I hinted here at the possibility that other animals might be thought of as sharing in God's image, I am now more inclined to view them as displaying a sharing in God's likeness. I have developed this idea further in Deane-Drummond (2011).

14. For preliminary comment on these stages, see Deane-Drummond (2009a, 208).

15. Aquinas was not aware, of course, of more contemporary neurological studies that suggest male and female minds may work differently, even if indirectly as a result of hormonal influences. However, the fact that he insisted that they both shared reasoning powers was a step in the right direction as far as affirming women are concerned. Topical neurological differences between male and female brains continue to be the subject of best selling popular science discussions, as in, for example, neuropsychologist Louann Brizendine's two books on male and female brains (Brizendine 2006, 2010).

16. A straightforward relationship with Christ could not readily define the meaning of image-bearing, since this would exclude all human populations prior to Christ's coming. It is possible, however, to envisage Christ as the exemplar of what true image-bearing may look like in the human community.

17. In this respect, I part company from Stenmark (2012) who has argued that it makes more sense to confine image-bearing to essential ontological characteristics. While how we act is certainly not sufficient as it presupposes certain capacities, naming capacities without marking out practices is problematic. See Deane-Drummond (2009b).

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