

national and international conferences over the past few years was specifically noted by some of our informants. It seems that Catholics have in large measure transferred the judgment of contraception from the religious authorities to their personal conscience. By doing this the eruption against authority which Martin predicted has been avoided but in the process religion has become more privatised. Martin concluded his article by arguing that such a privatised religion is vulnerable to secular pressures and to the emptying of theological concepts of their power (op. cit. pp 188-91).

- 16 When considering the clergy, F. Houtart comments that 'their basic financial dependency upon the institutional Church can render certain situations extremely painful', op. cit. p 320.
- 17 A number of commission members thought that this was the case. More recent studies in four English parishes and a survey of the delegates to the National Pastoral Congress have confirmed that there is no deep split between clergy and laity in England and Wales.

Evil in Angels and Men: Thomas Aquinas and Melanie Klein*

Marcus Lefébure O P

When I opened this series of Dominican conversations some four months ago now, I suggested that angels were worth studying not only in their own right but for the light they throw on the human condition. I want now in this concluding paper to apply this suggestion to our final topic, evil in angels. This paper will, therefore, consist of two main parts: In the first part I want to indicate how St Thomas analyses evil in angels, while in the second part I want to show how this analysis clarifies the root of evil in ourselves.

1 St Thomas' Analysis of Evil in the Angels

Turning, then, to our first concern, I want to help you pick a way through the often dense wood of St Thomas' thinking by as it were blazing those trees which serve as so many markers of the way through. These turn out on inspection and in reflection not to be as numerous as first appears. In fact St Thomas' thinking on evil in the angels continues to be what we have already seen his thinking on other aspects of the angels to be: the sustained and rigorous pursuit of the implications of certain basic metaphysical principles or axioms. The sheer intellectual energy, brilliance and

yet economy, therefore even the spare beauty of this argumentation is brought out by Fr Kenelm Foster's summary in Appendix 2 on Satan, (in Volume 9 of the Gilby bi-lingual edition of the *Summa*). I cannot emulate that *tour de force* here, it would be out of place, and so I shall attempt to supply my own thread through the labyrinth.

For our present purpose, we can restrict ourselves to the first six articles of 1a. Q. 63. And in art. 1 St Thomas begins by posing the general question whether there can be evil in angels at all. He answers by saying that any intelligent creature can of its very nature sin, since sin means deviating from the rightness that a given action should have, and only a being whose action and standard of acting were identical could not have this possibility of deviation. In other words, deviation from the rule of conduct must be a metaphysical possibility for everything other than God on the simple but basic principle we noted at the beginning of St Thomas's treatment of the knowledge of angels in Q. 54, namely that in no created being are essence and existence, substance and existence identical, for God alone is pure Act, therefore in God alone are activity, substance and existence one and the same (Q, 54, 1). It is thus because all creatures, including angels, are not pure act and there is therefore a gap between what they are and what they could further be that they could fail to achieve that further being and so fall into evil by their own choice. St Thomas, however, notes two important riders here. The first, expressed in the ad 3, is that since angels, as we saw when dealing with the love of the angels and the bent of that love (Q. 60, 5), by their very nature and inclination of their nature, turn to God as the goal and meaning of their being. From this it follows that any failure on the part of angels must consist in a failure to choose, *not* God as the principle of their natural being, but God as the object of their supernatural happiness. And so we are reminded again of the several distinctions between: nature and grace and glory even in angels (and see e.g. Q. 62, 1, 3 ad 3), between the intrinsic range of an angel's natural capacity to know and the objects of this knowing, and *therefore* between knowledge *per essentiam* and *per speciem*, let alone between the knowledge of nature and the knowledge of glory (see e.g. Q. 54, 2; Q. 55, 1, and Fr Kenelm's notes at pp 78-81, 92-95). And the second of St Thomas' riders, expressed in the ad 4, is in the nature of a hint forward: in distinguishing between two sorts of sinful choices, namely, between the choice of something that is evil in itself, like adultery, and something that is *in itself* good – 'for example, a man might choose to pray without heed to some ruling of the Church' – he suggests in effect that the way angels sinned was by choosing something good but out of context, out of

season, something they would have got as it were in due course. And it is to the elucidation of how we can conceive of this possibility that St Thomas then proceeds in his second article, whether the only sins angels can really commit are the sins of pride and envy.

For in this article St Thomas says that spiritual creatures can want only something spiritual that would be good for them, so that the only way in which they can want such a spiritual satisfaction *unduly* is to want it by not submitting to their superior where submission is due, which is what pride consists in. And it is when he goes on to explain this through the particularly condensed term 'unrivalled eminence', *excellētia singularis*, that he not only discloses the inner nature of *pride* but shows its inherent connection with *envy*. His analysis can be put in two complementary ways. Inductively or phenomenologically considered, envy consists in resenting another's well-being, as feeling it a hindrance and threat to one's own well-being, but this can only be because one wants that well-being entirely for oneself, and this is why the essence of pride consists in 'unrivalled eminence', wanting without sharing. Or, put genetically, one wants unrivalled eminence, a monopoly, something all to oneself, therefore anybody else having even some share in it is a threat to that monopoly, therefore one resents and detests any such share by another, and therefore pride includes this destructive envy. And this is why pride also contains greed, *avaritia*, taking greed loosely to denote all excessive craving for created things (ad 2).

Now this insight into what the sin of the angels consists in already reverberates for the human condition, but before pursuing that, we need to press the question of just how such a sin of envious pride was possible to creatures created in grace, as we have seen that they are in the previous question, Q. 62. Here St Thomas proceeds in two stages.

The first stage of the argument is to establish in what sense an angel desired to be as God. St Thomas says that it could not have desired to be as God in the sense of desiring to be *equal* to him because by the knowledge it had naturally it knew this to be impossible, and there was nothing in it to make it misjudge and choose such an impossibility as there is in us because of our passions and imagination. An angel could, however, desire to be as God with a likeness short of equality, either by placing its ultimate bliss in an objective which it could obtain by its own power to the detriment of the supernatural bliss that was in God's gift, or else by placing its ultimate bliss in what God could give it but without God's help, and therefore again by its own power. In either case, therefore, an angel would be wanting to have ultimate bliss simply and solely of

itself, *per suam virtutem*, which is the prerogative of God alone, and it was in this that its sin consisted. As Fr Kenelm puts it:

We can conceive of this happening in one of two ways: either the angel, apprehending the supernatural life as a possibility for him, might have aspired to have it in the wrong way – that is, as the achievement of his own nature, not as a pure gift received from God – or else he might have refused to aspire to that which he could *only* have as a gift, preferring to rest in that joy to which his natural powers could bring him. St Thomas states these alternatives at the end of the Reply in 63, 3, adding however that ‘these two views of the devil’s fall are in a way the same, since according to both he wanted to have ultimate bliss simply and solely of himself’. In both the cases envisaged the thing desired is a real positive good, in the one case a supernatural good, in the other the angel’s natural good; but in both there is the same negative proviso: *the good must not be a gift*. As so conceived then, the angel’s sin consisted in a wrong aspiration to God-likeness (*appetit indebite esse similis Deo*) inasmuch as he aspired to be absolutely autonomous, not indeed directly in respect of existence, but in respect of the fulfilment of existence which is joy; and self-dependence in joy is, for St Thomas, strictly a *divine* condition. The devil would have the joy of his existence, but not as from God. Therefore he would prefer, as the source of his joy and the fulfilment of his existence, himself to his Creator; and so doing would, so far as in him lay, abolish his Creator. Such was his sin, as St Thomas conceives it (p 318)

The second stage of seeing how creatures created in grace could sin consists in the acceptance of the idea that there were somehow two ‘instants’ in the existence of angels, the instant of the creation in goodness and grace and the meriting of supernatural bliss and the instant when the bad angels somehow blocked the complete acceptance of this gift of God. This insight is single but it built up bit by bit: St Thomas argues successively in articles 4, 5 and 6 that the angels were not created naturally evil, that the devil did not become evil by choice in the first instant of his creation, and that therefore it was somehow in a second ‘instant’ – albeit an instant that followed immediately, *statim*, after the first – that the evil angels made a choice which cancelled out their previous act of meriting bliss. And it is when St Thomas seeks to explain what these two ‘instants’ consisted in that he illuminates the whole subject further. For in art. 6 ad 4 he reverts to the distinction he had already made between the ‘evening’ and the ‘morning’ knowledge of the angels, meaning by these two forms of knowledge of created reality as existing in its own nature and as they are in their

absolute beginning, namely as they are in the Word. And in the light of this distinction he is able to say that all angels began by reflecting on themselves (as was proper for them, since 'the primary and most radical knowledge is self-knowledge': note a, on p 92 of Fr Kenelm's translation) – this was the first 'instant' – but that only the good angels went on to turn to the Word with praise whilst some 'remained in themselves, *swollen with pride*, and became "night", as St Augustine says' – so that it was in this second 'instant' that the bad angels separated themselves out from the good. In other words, it is as if all angels were created in an *élan* towards God as their fulfilment and as if they all chose the first movement of this *élan* by accepting themselves as creatures and likenesses of God but also as if some of them then as it were faltered at this stage, refusing to be carried further and did not pass on to turn to God, and in this way reversed the first movement (and see also Q. 58, 6 & 7; Q. 62, 1 ad 3). (For mention of 'instants' and such other 'time' words as *statim*, *quando* etc. see e.g. 62, 1; 1 ad 3; 3 in c & ad 3; 4 in c; 5 *sed contra* and *in c*; 63 (1 ad 3, ad 4.); 5 obj. 4, in c & ad 4; 6 obj 4, in c & ad 2, ad 3, ad 4.)

Now the distinction made here reminds me powerfully of the distinction made in psychology between primary and secondary narcissism. This latter distinction, as I understand it, refers to two states of mind which follow each other in any infant's life and denotes the distinction between the apprehension of everything from the point of view of the self but not to the exclusion of the other. These two distinctions – between the two 'instants' of the existence of the angels and the two as it were 'instants' (or perhaps 'positions') in the life of the infant – are so reminiscent of each other that they suggest the further notion that the analysis of evil in the angels can at least in part be taken as an analysis of the essential features of evil in human beings. And this brings me to the second part of my introductory paper, concerned with the light an analysis of evil in angels can throw on the root of evil in ourselves.

2 *The Root of evil in ourselves in the light of the analysis of evil in angels*

So the idea I now want to pursue is that St Thomas's careful analysis of the possibility of evil in angels enables us to see the root of evil in ourselves more clearly. And the way in which I want to establish this is by an apparent but not, I think, real detour. I want to remind you of the way in which Peter Brown presents the inner logic of St Augustine's 'great and arduous' work *The City of God* in *Augustine of Hippo*, not so much because it is biographically and imaginatively so plausible but rather because it ex-

presses certain penetrating insights into the human condition *tout court*. The inner dynamic of *The City of God*, as you will recall, is set up by the conflict between two loves, and it is the way in which Peter Brown re-presents this conflict that is relevant to our purpose here.

He begins, for our purpose, by summing up the general intent of *The City of God*:

The essence of Christianity had to be seized and presented in general terms in *The City of God*: this lay in re-establishing the correct relationship between all created beings and their Creator, and, consequently, between one another. Such a formulation assumed an alternative. The nature of the deranged relationship between creature and Creator had to be analysed; its origin had to be laid bare in the fall of the angels; its juxtaposition seized in terms of two 'cities', and the human race would be presented in *The City of God* as divided between two fields of force.

It was Augustine's intention, in *The City of God*, to prove to his reader that hints of a division between an 'earthly' and a 'heavenly' city could be seen throughout the history of the human race. (p 319)

From there Peter Brown goes on to remind us how St Augustine saw this conflict of Cain and Abel. And to bring this out I need first of all to recall the crucial passage in *The City of God* itself, before returning to Peter Brown's commentary:

The first founder of the earthly city was, as we have seen, a fratricide; for, overcome by envy, he slew his own brother, a citizen of the Eternal City, on pilgrimage in this world. Hence it is no wonder that long afterwards this first precedent – what the Greeks call an *archetype* – was answered by a kind of reflection, by an event of the same kind at the founding of the city which was to be the capital of the earthly city of which we are speaking, and was to rule over so many peoples. For there also, as one of their poets says when he mentions the crime, 'Those walls were dripping with a brother's blood'. For this is how Rome was founded, when Remus, as Roman history witnesses, was slain by his brother Romulus . . . Anyone whose aim was to glory in the exercise of power would obviously enjoy less power if his sovereignty was diminished by a living partner. Therefore, in order that the sole power should be wielded by one person, the partner was eliminated . . . (Book XV, 5 Pelican Classic, 1972, at p 600).

You will see from this how for St Augustine this archetypal sin of fratricide was rooted in *envy*, which, in turn, is linked to the desire to have a monopoly of *power*. And it is with this passage in mind

that we can return to Peter Brown. He says:

A view of history that had been content to follow a string of events to their culmination, is now immeasurably enriched by the need to trace, in every age, the way in which men's lives had crystallized around two basic alternatives.

This tension was 'published' at the very onset of the human race, by being concentrated in one of the most elemental of human relationships, the relationship of a younger to an elder brother. Augustine (himself the younger brother of Navigius) brings out to the full the charged and paradoxical quality of the whole of human history in terms of the single incident of Cain and Abel. Cain, the elder brother, is the true son of his father, Adam. He is the 'natural' man after the Fall. He is a 'citizen of this world', because he is fully rooted and at home in it: even his name means 'full ownership'. He hoped for no more than he could see; so, he founded the first city . . . Abel, by contrast, built no city; his son, Enoch, stands out in marked contrast to the rooted life of his cousins, men 'not out of place in this world, content with the peace and felicity of this passing time', by hoping for something else: *speravit invocare nomen Domini*, 'he waited upon the name of the Lord'.

Augustine treats the tension between Cain and Abel as universal, because he can explain it in terms applicable to all men . . .

This, then, is Augustine's contribution to a new view of the past. A universal sweep, a universal explanation of men's basic motives, a certainty of the existence, in every age, of a single, fundamental tension . . . (pp 320, 321).

It is already a great deal to have simplified the problem of human evil by tracing it back to envy and the lust for power among human beings, *libido dominandi*, but Peter Brown goes yet further by following St Augustine to trace the root of even this. He does this by first bringing out the specific character of Abel's existence, taking Abel now as representative of the seeker after the heavenly city:

For Augustine, both past and present remain largely opaque; but he could, throughout, see the outlines of a choice. Men are inextricably 'merged' by the needs of their common, mortal life. But ultimately, the only thing that matters is to transcend this insidious symbiosis: men must be prepared to be 'distinct' . . .

The need to save one's identity as a citizen of Heaven, is therefore the centre of gravity of Augustine's idea of the relationship of the two 'cities' in this world. The normal human society has to make room for a group of men who must

remain aware of being different, for a *civitas . . . peregrina*; for resident strangers (p 323).

But the stranger was also resident, and therefore in some real sense concerned with the city that gave him hospitality as well as with the city beyond for which he was yearning. He was therefore not detached from the conditions of his human existence, he was even dependent on them:

For the *peregrinus* is also a temporary resident. He must accept an intimate dependence on the life around him: he must realise that it was created by men like himself, to achieve some 'good' that he is glad to share with them, to improve some situation, to avoid some greater evil, he must be genuinely grateful for the favourable conditions that it provides . . . So *The City of God*, far from being a book about flight from the world, is a book whose recurrent theme is 'our business within this common mortal life; it is a book about being other-worldly in the world . . .

The members of the *civitas peregrina* therefore maintain their identity not by withdrawal, but by something far more difficult: by maintaining a firm and balanced perspective on the whole range of loves of which men are capable in their present state: 'It is because of this that the Bride of Christ, the City of God, sings in the Song of Songs: "*Ordinate in me caritatem*", "Order in me my love". (pp 324, 325)

And so, on this note of dependence and gratitude Peter Brown leads us back still further to the source of all goodness, the ultimate source of our dependence and gratitude, God himself, and thereby restates the matter of envy, power and therefore omnipotence and its opposites gratitude and dependence, in the largest possible context of God's relationship with the devil as well as with human beings:

Augustine had come to a firmly rooted idea of the essential goodness of created things, and so of human achievements. These good things were 'gifts': *Bona . . . bona* is a key-phrase throughout *The City of God*; and God is thought of mainly as Creator and, even more, as a *largitor*, as a lavish of gifts . . .

The relations between God and the goods enjoyed by created beings is conceived of as a relation between an utterly gratuitous giver and a recipient. Augustine could not have seized upon a more difficult and ambivalent relationship. The acknowledgement of dependence, and with it, the capacity to be grateful, does not come easily, in Augustine's opinion; and he will unravel the origin and relationship of the two 'cities' precisely in terms of this basic relationship of giver and recipient.

The Devil had wished to enjoy what he had been given, as if it were his own: he had wished no other source of goodness than himself. Such usurped omnipotence could only diminish him. It altered his relations with his fellows: it caused him to assert this omnipotence by dominating his equals; it made him view with envy those who possessed a source of goodness, a felicity outside his own (pp 325, 326. See also pp 372-375).

These last words seem to me to be a quite masterly summary of so much: he lays bare not only the inner logic of St Augustine's thinking in this great book *The City of God*, not only the inner connection between the sin of the angels and the sin of human beings, not even the innermost rationale of evil in the devil in terms of the struggle between envy and gratitude but thereby, and also, the inner essence of the sin of *both* human beings and angels. Let me unpack this last remark a little.

As I read and re-read Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo*, I became more and more convinced, from internal evidence above all, that the author was writing not merely with the imaginative capacity for identification of the great historian but with an imaginative capacity that had been fired, forged and tempered by the experience of a personal psycho-analysis, and not merely of any psycho-analysis but the particular form of a Kleinian psycho-analysis. And I say this because Melanie Klein was the disciple of Freud who under the appearance and ambition of following the pioneer insights of Freud in fact pushed her own researches into the depths of the human psyche beyond the 'depressive' and 'paranoid-schizoid' 'positions' of the first months of life and postulated a primordial struggle which she summed up in the last work of her personal and professional maturity, *Envy and Gratitude*, published in 1957 when she herself was 75. And I use the term 'primordial struggle' advisedly in view of the fact that her own leading disciple and expositor, Hanna Segal, tells us that this final work of hers provoked the contention, so fascinating for a theologian, that 'Klein was reverting to the doctrine of the original sin, which she recast as envy' (*Klein*, 1979, p 148).

I wonder whether you see what I am driving at, groping towards? I may be able to do no more at this stage than to evoke and suggest. But let me make one last effort to formulate my insight. What I am contending is that —

- i) there is at least a convergence of the analysis of evil in angels by St Thomas Aquinas and the psycho-analytic account of the roots of psychic malady by Melanie Klein as conveyed by Peter Brown through the medium of his study of St Augustine;
- ii) that this convergence may be more than a simple convergence and amount to a concentricity in so far as the root of evil in

- both angels and human beings consists on either view of a refusal of dependence, therefore ingratitude, and therefore envy and would-be omnipotence; but
- iii) that this convergence amounting to concentricity does *not* amount to a coincidence in so far as human beings enjoy their being successively – grow and fail and mature in time – whereas angels know at most two ‘instants’ and thus enjoy their being in this sense instantaneously; and
 - iv) that angels do know at least two such ‘instants’ whereas God as pure Act knows only one, so that the latter is radically distinguished from the former.

The fact that human beings exist in time whereas angels do not exist in time in this sense is the measure of the difference between human beings and angels, just as the fact that angels know at least two ‘instants’ or moments whereas God is *totus simul*, utterly instantaneous, is the measure of the radical difference between even angels and God. There is, as I hinted earlier, some intellectual difficulty about thinking of two instants that are not, at least in our usual sense, temporal, and yet we do seem obliged to entertain some such notion (which may in fact be very close to Melanie Klein’s also interestingly intriguing concept of ‘positions’). And with the aid of such a notion of non-temporal ‘instants’ we can, on the one hand, mark the radical distinction between angels and God, but we can also, on the other hand, and more pertinently to our interests, begin to see what in human beings are processes over time reduced to their essential nature and as such attributed to angels. What we as human beings enact gradually but thereby also have the chance to re-enact time and time again is what angels enact instantaneously but thereby immovably (see especially Q. 64, art 2: *Utrum voluntas daemonum sit obstinata in malo*).

To sum up, I submit that in the angels we see the concentrated essence of our own choices, we see our choice telescoped – in the sense of collapsed – into two essential ‘moments’ – created good but derivative, we can either in time choose to affirm our dependence and therefore be grateful and share power, or we can choose to refuse our dependence and therefore be envious and aspire to omnipotence, wanting our ultimate bliss, as St Thomas says of the arch-evil one, the devil, ‘simply and utterly of’ ourselves, ‘and this is uniquely the prerogative of God’.

This is the sense in which I want to suggest that in this respect too a study of the angels is a lens through which to see ourselves more clearly, it is, to revert to the phrase of Wittgenstein, a particularly instructive ‘object of comparison’.

Important problems remain but I think that with the above considerations we are on course.

* The substance of the paper that introduced the last in a series of 'Dominican Conversations' on St Thomas' thinking about the angels held in the University Chaplaincy, Edinburgh.

Will there be Life before Death?

Tony Crowley

The Demonstration, by Fr Des Wilson, 1982, pp 126, £1.25.

When the dust from the present troubles settles, the debt to those who have consistently and courageously campaigned against injustice and violence will be clear. One of those campaigners is Fr Des Wilson, who has now written a book that covers the struggle for justice and peace (note that it is justice and peace, not peace and then justice) in N Ireland. It would be unfair to Des Wilson to attempt to review his book out of its context, so it is necessary to sketch out the background first.

In the eyes of "The Man From *The Daily Mail*," to quote the song of that title,

"Ireland is a very funny place, sir,
It's a strange and a troubled land".

And there's no disputing that superficial observation, though it's one of the few comments from that particular source regarding the present situation in N Ireland that I could agree with. For the characteristics of the present era of troubles in the North have been horror (the violence of a bloody Monday, a bloody Tuesday, a bloody Wednesday, a bloody Thursday, a bloody Friday, a bloody Saturday, and bloody Sunday) terror (sectarian warfare, intimidation, internment, rubber and plastic bullets) anger and frustration (sit-ins, demos, barricades, riots) and the constant unemployment (Billy-now Lord-Blease of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, said there was a "crisis in unemployment"¹ in 1971 when the figure