

this explanation, it remains an open question whether an imported interpretation is appropriate to the text.

These critical remarks, however, are not intended to outweigh the merits of the book. Not everyone will agree with it, of course, but I believe that any further interpretation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* will have to deal with it in one way or another.—Jakub Jirsa, *Charles University*

SHIELDS, Daniel. *Nature and Nature's God: A Philosophical and Scientific Defense of Aquinas's Unmoved Mover Argument*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2023. ix + 303 pp. Cloth, \$75.00—The first of Aquinas's famous five proofs is often thought to fail due to its reliance upon the impossibility of an infinite regress of movers or outdated Aristotelian physics. In *Nature and Nature's God* Daniel Shields takes on the impressive task of replying to these and other standard objections. The book is divided into two parts. The first section advocates for a novel, modest understanding of the first proof, corrects common misinterpretations of it, and integrates the first proof with other arguments for God's existence. The second part defends the relevance of the motion proof in the context of modern physics.

The first three chapters are dedicated to interpreting the first proof itself. Shields clarifies that “Aquinas's ultimate goal is not to establish that God must exist in order to initiate order at the beginning of the universe, but rather that God must exist in order to explain motion now.” He is at pains to emphasize the first proof is an argument from change; it alone does not have the resources to show that God is pure act, as some interpreters have thought. In addition, he argues that Aquinas's theory of motion is compatible with the view that a mover need not be in contact with a projectile for the entirety of its motion.

Shields explains Aquinas's key premise that “what is in motion can only be moved by what is in act.” To change from rest into motion something must first have the potential to be moved. However, “the same thing cannot be in potency and act in the relevant respects at the same time” because the two states are mutually exclusive. But since what is merely in potency can have no causal impact on the world, it follows that “for every motion there is a first mover that is already in act.” Next, he recalls the distinction between an essentially and accidentally ordered series of causes.

An accidentally ordered series can proceed infinitely backward in time, whereas an essentially ordered one cannot. An infinite essentially ordered series is impossible because the members of such a series do not in themselves have the power to produce their effect. For example, “a boxcar cannot account for the motion of the caboose because a boxcar is only a moved mover. . . . The same would be true of an infinite number of them coupled together.” If there is an infinite series of causes none of

which in themselves has the power to move, then such a causal series alone could never explain some instance of motion. Thus, an essentially ordered series of causes requires a first mover that in itself has the power to move. Notably, Shields thinks Aquinas has no intention of ruling out purely natural entities as first movers in the first way; rather, according to Shields, Aquinas wants to establish only the need for some first mover(s), but not necessarily God.

The further task of proving the God's existence is left to other of Aquinas's arguments, considered in chapters 4 and 5, which rely on the principles defended in the first proof. Shields notes that motion in the universe either has a beginning or is perpetual; in both cases, God must exist to create or sustain it. God is required to sustain a perpetual universe because the constituents of the universe are corruptible. Given that in an infinite amount of time all possibilities will be realized, it follows there must be some point in the infinite past where all possible beings are simultaneously corrupted. As Shields points out, "in that case, there would have been nothing at all and there would still be nothing, contrary to fact." On the other hand, God is required to explain a universe or causal series with a beginning because without God, there would be nothing to ultimately explain how the causal chain began.

In the second part of the book Shields argues that Aquinas's motion proof is consistent with inertia, a fundamental tenet of classical mechanics. Although the Aristotelian understanding of projectile motion is false, the broader worldview is easily adjusted to this phenomena. Air does not simultaneously cause a projectile's motion, rather, "the projector imparts to the projectile an accidental form or power, from which forward motion flows . . . even after contact has been lost."

Further, he considers how the second law of thermodynamics suggests that the perpetual motion of the universe is impossible. Given an infinite past and the fact that "the amount of energy available to do work constantly decreases," all motion in the universe would eventually cease, resulting in a "heat death" as temperatures approach absolute zero. Motion in the present would be impossible were it not for the power of God sustaining motion in the universe.

Shields's analysis of Aquinas proofs and explanation of their relevance to modern physics is compelling; however, the attempt to provide both a detailed historical analysis but also sound, straightforward argument(s) for God's existence do not always mix. To take one example, Shields is likely correct that "the First Way . . . does not establish that an unmoved mover need be supermundane . . . [and that] even inanimate physical causes might be the unmoved movers primarily responsible for motion in the universe." Nevertheless, it still stretches the imagination to think Aquinas himself did not intend to prove the existence of God (with a capital "G") in the first way.

The book makes a valuable and needed contribution to the literature on the first proof. It clarifies the errors of both detractors and defenders of Aquinas. The second half of the book is particularly unique in its approach

to the reconciliation of modern physics with proofs from motion. Shields has produced an excellent resource for understanding the first way and an indispensable guide to the interpretation of some of Aquinas's main arguments for God's existence.—Caleb Estep, *Saint Louis University*

VINKESTEIJN, Robert. *Philosophical Perspectives on Galen of Pergamum. Four Case-Studies on Human Nature and the Relation between Body and Soul*. Leiden: Brill, 2022. viii + 357 pp. Cloth, \$155.00—Vinkesteijn's book, stemming from his 2020 dissertation at Utrecht University, explores Galen's views on (human) nature and the soul. Opting to sidestep the debate on the unity of Galen's thought, he offers a series of close readings of some of Galen's most philosophical writings, radiating from the short treatise *The Capacities of the Soul Follow the Mixtures of the Body (QAM)*, which encapsulates the questions he investigates throughout the book. Although many of the texts and themes examined have been extensively discussed in previous scholarship, its strength lies in its steadfast and coherent defense of a long-favored interpretation of Galen as "somatizing the soul."

Case Study 1 revisits *QAM*, which has sparked considerable debate in Galenic studies. It defends the idea, recently criticized, that despite Galen's agnostic statements about the substance of the soul elsewhere, he supports here the physicalist and more speculative thesis that the whole soul is indeed identical to the specific mixture of elemental qualities in the homoeomerous parts of the main psychic organs. Vinkesteijn maintains that this thesis aligns with Galen's general physiology, and that Galen's analysis of the soul as a formal aspect in a hylomorphic whole represents not an exegetical stance on Aristotelian positions but his own viewpoint, applicable to both the nonrational and rational parts. The study then rightly emphasizes Galen's conviction that our actions and affections can and should be modified by habituation. It argues that there is no basis for assuming that the identity thesis leads to a radically deterministic ethic. Indeed, it showcases the possibility of a second formation of our bodily mixture, with Galen attributing to the rational part of the soul a godlike potential for change and improvement of the soul's virtues—although it concedes the unlikelihood of such personal enhancement, as it hinges on rare natural predispositions.

Case Study 2 focuses on Galen's definition of nature and his elemental theory; it focuses on the first book of Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates's On the Nature of Man (HNH)* and examines the notable absence of the soul as an explanatory factor in an account of human nature. It argues that Galen articulates a concept of nature as a primary hylomorphic substance, shared by all beings subject to generation and decay and determining their secondary properties. The study then