Substance Made Manifest:
Metaphysical and Semantic Implications
of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation

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This paper responds to Bruce Marshall's use of logic to clarify the metaphysical issues at stake in the doctrine of transubstantiation. While appreciating and agreeing with the general approach of finding connections between logic and metaphysics, on the one hand, and the communal and ecumenical significance of Eucharistic doctrine, on the other, this paper criticizes Marshall's particular analysis as beholden to a distinctively modern approach to logic, and displaying a typically modern neglect of the notion of substance. The conclusion suggests that distinctively Catholic teaching on transubstantiation is significant today not only for proclaiming a mystery of Christian faith, but also for calling attention to classical categories of reality, categories once considered more natural and common but subsequently obscured by modern philosophical and theological developments.

> *Verbum caro, panem verum*
> *verbo carnem efficit:*
> *fitque sanguis Christi merum,*
> *et si sensus deficit,*
> *ad firmandum cor sincerum*
> *sola fides sufficit.*
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> —St. Thomas Aquinas
> *Pange Lingua Gloriosi Corporis Mysterium*

1. The Power of Language

As the symposium's designated philosopher, invited to talk about metaphysics, I confess that I will allow myself to be drawn into technical discussions in terminology Aquinas adopted from the Aristotelian philosophical tradition.[1] With that in mind, I wish to make clear that I recognize that Aquinas was a theologian, and perhaps more importantly that he was a poet—a metaphysical poet, in the words of Sertillanges.[2] The great literary critic Hugh Kenner, reflecting on the *Pange Linga*, describes Thomas's poetic virtuosity as taking language to the very limits of

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[2] "St. Thomas is, properly speaking, a metaphysical poet, taking the word in its broadest sense to signify one who interprets the universe: a prophet of being—of God, humanity, nature." A. G. Sertillanges, O.P., *Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy*, trans. Godfrey Anstruther, 1931, p. 9.

its capability, attempting "a virtual transubstantiation of language."[3] Aquinas understood deeply, and exploited as well as anyone, the power of language, and he did not adopt and use technical philosophical terminology without carefully attending to what, and how, it signified. I do not want to lose sight of this, because at stake in Bruce Marshall's paper is not metaphysics, per se, but the use of language to express metaphysical claims that in turn have deep personal and communal significance.

Marshall's paper examines a *theological* doctrine with an eye to the *ecumenical* significance of its *metaphysical* analysis. I believe that this is a most fruitful approach, as I am already inclined to think that theological disagreement often boils down to philosophical, and especially metaphysical disagreement—think, for example, of how different views about justification rest on different assumptions about divine causality.[4] But, as will become clear, I will push one step further and argue that metaphysical disagreement is often not so much a matter of parties disagreeing about how metaphysical principles apply to particular cases, or even about what metaphysical principles there are, but about how language can be used to express metaphysical principles. Given that different people can and do learn to use language in and through different conceptual frameworks, it may take some work to ensure that an apparent metaphysical agreement or disagreement is in fact genuine; indeed, it is not uncommon for apparent disagreement to be actually a state of *confusion* that does not even rise to the level of disagreement, because the incommensurability of the conceptual frameworks of the different parties does not allow them to communicate effectively or to share enough to establish the kind of basic agreement required about how to speak about metaphysical principles, in order to support a particular disagreement about what metaphysical principles there are or how they apply to particular cases.[5]

It is not only that metaphysical principles have to be formulated in language, so that to communicate meaningfully about metaphysics we need to attend carefully to the language we use to formulate those principles. The further issue is that the expression of metaphysical principles implicates logical or semantic principles, so that even if we are using (what seems to be) a common language we cannot be sure that we are using (and interpreting and analyzing) that language in the same way. It is thus incumbent on the modern metaphysician to attend as much to the semantic framework within which he formulates his arguments as to the metaphysical framework his arguments are meant to convey.[6]

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[3] Hugh Kenner, "Rhyme: An Unfinished Monograph," in *Common Knowledge* 10 (2004): 377-425.

[4] Cf. Charles Morerod, *Ecumenism and Philosophy: Philosophical Questions for a Renewal of Dialogue* (Sapientia Press, 2006).

[5] Attention to this problem is what distinguishes the approach to articulating Aquinas's metaphysics in Gyula Klima, "The Semantic Principles Underlying St. Thomas Aquinas's Metaphysics of Being," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5 (March, 1996): 87-141. http://faculty.fordham.edu/klima/TiffedPapers/MPAT.pdf

[6] The need for metaphysics to attend to logical or semantic presuppositions has been often noted. Cf. Henry Babcock Veatch, *Two Logics: The Conflict between Classical and Neo-Analytic Philosophy* (Northwestern University Press, 1969); Peter T. Geach, *Logic Matters* (Blackwell, 1972); Peter T. Geach, *God and the Soul* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969); Peter T. Geach, *Reference and Generality: An Examination of some Medieval and Modern Theories*

2. A Disquieting Suggestion about Metaphysics

The modern practice of metaphysics is in fact marked—one might venture to say distinctively and essentially marked—by considerable confusion about what even counts as metaphysics. There is simply no guarantee that two people who believe that they are both talking about metaphysics are in fact talking about the same thing. By analogy, recall that Alasdair MacIntyre, interpreting the history of moral philosophy, observed that it is not simply the history of people giving differing answers to the same enduring moral questions, but a history of different questions being asked, a history of different assumptions about what questions could and should be asked. More significantly, MacIntyre's "disquieting suggestion" in *After Virtue* is that the questions asked later in that history (say, about rights, or about duties) arose within a conceptual framework that was a mere fragment of that in which former questions had been asked (questions about happiness and virtue). The fragmentary nature of the later conceptual framework not only ensured that its questions were different from those of the earlier framework, but it meant that even to the extent that the later thinkers tried to address the questions of, and use the terminology of, the earlier thinkers, they would find those questions intractable and even incoherent because the questions, and the terminology in which they were formulated, were cut off from the original conceptual framework which once gave them meaning.

I believe we are still waiting for someone to write for the history of metaphysics something like what *After Virtue* does for the history of ethics. The book—I imagine that it would be called "After Substance"—would trace how the notion of "substance" once gave unity to metaphysical inquiry and fostered fruitful debate and disagreement, and that, since some catastrophic event we know not what (but marking the beginning of the "modern" era of philosophy), the notion of substance has dropped out of metaphysics, and the conversations that have continued—whatever their merits, whatever their superficial similarity to the conversations that preceded them, and whatever the brilliance and ingenuity of its participants—simply fail to fully participate in the kind of reflection that used to be called metaphysics.

I do not think this is an exaggeration. Preparing this paper, I surveyed recent standard textbooks on metaphysics. Each one treated a set of questions or issues, but without making clear how this set of questions was generated, or how its members are related to each other. Typically, the set included questions about time and space, about mind and body relationship, persistence through time, personal identity, free will—questions that, from a classical perspective, would not belong so much to metaphysics as to physics, psychology or philosophical anthropology, and ethics. Other topics commonly listed include universals, realism and anti-realism, and possibility and necessity (or "possible worlds"), all closer to what might classically be included in

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(Cornell University Press, 1962); Desmond Paul Henry, *That Most Subtle Question (Quaestio subtilissima): the Metaphysical Bearing of Medieval and Contemporary Linguistic Disciplines* (Manchester University Press, 1984).

metaphysics, but some verging on the topic of logic, and others on the very assumptions (that there is a reality) with which metaphysics must begin. And, in the formulation and exploration of such questions, even when terminology from the old metaphysics is retained (e.g. "property," "substrate," "quality," "nominalism" vs. "realism," "universals") they are not used in the context in which they once were and it is hard to tell whether they retain any connection to the ancient and medieval discourse in which they once played a role.

Not surprisingly, not one of the books I surveyed contained a discussion of *substance*. The word is simply not central to the modern project (or projects) that are called metaphysics. Nor is it simply that the *word* "substance" is missing, while some *basic notion* of substance remains under some other guise; there is talk of *objects* or *things* or *entities* or *reality*, but in modern analytic metaphysics, none of these has a thick, central role in organizing the science of metaphysics, none of these has become the occasion for meaningful reflection on the notion of basic or ultimate reality that substance once was in classical metaphysics (much in the way that, as MacIntyre has helped us to see, *right*, *duty*, *law*, and *morality* do not capture, and have even taken on different senses apart from, the notion of *virtue*).

Predictably, modern textbooks of metaphysics thus often struggle even to define the very science at issue. Consider these awkward accounts of what unifies the diverse topics that constitute the set of metaphysical questions:

- *Metaphysics: The Big Questions* (2nd ed), ed. Peter van Inwagen and Dean W. Zimmerman (Blackwell, 2008): defines metaphysics in terms of attempts to "describe things as they really are," and pushes further to try to characterize metaphysics as concerned with a certain kind of general statements about the nature of reality (pp. 1-5).

- *Arguing About Metaphysics*, ed. Michael C. Rea (Routledge, 2009): "Metaphysics is the attempt to provide rigorously developed answers to non-scientific questions about what exists and about the necessary connections among such concepts, properties, and relations as pertain to things other than reasons, values, and mathematical objects" (p. 3).

- *Reading Metaphysics: Selected Texts with Interactive Commentary*, Helen Beebee and Julian Dodd (Blackwell, 2007): "metaphysics is the philosophical (that is the *conceptual* rather than the scientific) engagement of questions concerning the nature of reality: how things are" (p. 3).

- *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, ed. Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne, and Dean W. Zimmerman (Blackwell, 2008): does not attempt an explicit definition of metaphysics, but the implicit definition is: *attempts to accurately describe abstract patterns in apparently diverse phenomena* (p. 3).

- *Metaphysics: An Anthology*, ed. Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa (Blackwell, 1999): "Metaphysics is a philosophical inquiry into the most basic and general features of reality and our place in it" (p. ix).

There is nothing scientific or systematic about this survey of textbooks, but I believe that these examples are representative of what passes for metaphysics within Anglo-American analytic philosophy today. The hesitancy and awkwardness that these authors exhibit in trying to define their subject matter is striking. Perhaps the most honest approach of all is found in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on "Metaphysics." Author Peter van Inwagen notes that Aristotle could define metaphysics by its subject matter, but says, "It is no longer possible to define metaphysics that way." Van Inwagen thinks there is no way to define modern metaphysics, that it can only be captured descriptively, as constituted by a list of questions. Classical metaphysics not only had, but helped us to understand the notion of, an essential definition; modern metaphysics, well . . . not so much.[7]

My aim in drawing attention to the state of discourse that calls itself metaphysics today is to make clear not only the disconnect between that discourse and a prior discourse, but to point out that the possibility of bridging the gap between the two discourses is much more difficult than a matter of settling a disagreement; it is instead a matter of recognizing, and then overcoming, a confusion.[8] I wish it were enough to point out the differences of metaphysical language that lead to this confusion, but unfortunately we have also learned that there are confusions about the functions that language plays in trying to express these metaphysical views. Different conceptual frameworks can make not only different *metaphysical* assumptions, but different *semantic* assumptions. Clearing up confusions about metaphysics is not only a matter of agreeing about what terminology to employ; we also have to seek agreement about how terminology is and can be employed. As Yves Simon once scribbled on a piece of paper, "The ways to metaphysics remain blocked so long as the reformation is not effected where it is most badly needed, in Logic."[9]

I have emphasized this point because I think it is central to appreciating the great value of Marshall's approach to expounding the significance of Eucharistic doctrine, particularly his

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[7] The story of how we've reached the modern state of confusion, and the loss of the notion of substance, would necessarily have to cover the proliferation of ideas about substance in late medieval and early modern philosophy, as ably documented by Robert Pasnau in *Metaphysical Themes, 1274-1671* (Oxford, 2011). And yet notice how even here, where the author is attentive to the notion of substance and its disappearance in later philosophy, he positions himself as speaking from the modern tradition: "The subject of this book is four centuries of debate over metaphysics, in our modern sense of the term. Although we now think of metaphysics differently from how the field was defined during our period, I will not attempt, here or later, to grapple with the question of what metaphysics is or was taken to be. Instead, I will take for granted our current sense of what a metaphysical question is, and will pursue such questions over a range of historical contexts . . . ." (5).

[8] Marshall writes: "Rumors of the death of 'substance metaphysics' are, I think, exaggerated" (p. 16). And yet his evidence—that there are some "sophisticated defenders" of substance, "not least among analytic philosophers"— would seem to support my position. The notion of substance has particular defenders precisely because it needs them; if it were a common and operative notion, not only in metaphysics but in common discourse, it would not have or need professional, sophisticated defense.

[9] Archived with the Yves Simon Papers, 1920-1959, box 2, held at the Jacques Maritain Center at the University of Notre Dame.

explicit attention to logic in articulating the metaphysics of the Eucharist.[10] But I also think that even more work needs to be done in appreciating the role of logic and metaphysics in the theological and ecumenical issues at stake.

3. Marshall vs. Aquinas on Metaphysics and Semantics

Marshall's paper initially distinguishes two sorts of metaphysical questions about the Eucharist, concerning, first (1) *the fact of Christ's presence*, and second, the *manner* of Christ's presence. Subdividing this latter question, Marshall (following Aquinas), distinguishes the questions of (2) *how Christ is present* in the Eucharist (ST III, 76), and (3) *how Christ comes to be present* (III, 75)—that is, distinguishing the metaphysical state of affairs, from the nature of the change leading to that state of affairs.

In contemporary circumstances, Marshall finds growing ecumenical agreement about the first question, the reality of Christ's presence, but "striking loss of interest in how to understand that reality" (p. 2). Questions about both the nature of the presence, and the coming into being of that presence, are ignored, possibly because focused attention on them might seem to threaten the valuable ecumenical agreement about the first issue, the fact of Christ's presence.

Of course the Catholic Church's distinctive doctrine of "transubstantiation" implies something about all three questions: it affirms not only the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but Christ's *substantial* presence, as resulting from a conversion or change from a prior substance. As Marshall notes, for the Church this is not merely a matter of metaphysics, but of piety and worship: *Mysterium Fidei* (1965) indicates that the particular doctrine of transubstantiation should be the basis of a renewal of Eucharistic devotion. And yet, also as Marshall notes: "This, it has to be said, belongs among those teachings of the ordinary papal Magisterium which have yet to be received in the Church, perhaps especially by theologians" (p. 4).

Following Marshall's procedure, let us begin with the first question, concerning the fact of Christ's presence. Marshall explores the nature of this claim by analyzing it much as a scholastic would—in terms of the truth conditions of the statements, "This is my body," and "this is my blood." To analyze the truth conditions of the statements, he turns to an analysis of the form of the statement itself, which he classifies as an *identity statement*. In general, Marshall is right to attend to the fact that metaphysical formulations have implications on the semantic level, and he is rightly giving explicit attention to analyzing the formulations on the semantic level. However, in its particulars, I do not find Marshall's analysis attentive to the distinctiveness, and the contingency, of the semantic framework it assumes.

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[10] There are those who would attempt to treat the metaphysics of the Eucharist without attending to logic or semantics at all; e.g. Maryln McCord Adams, *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist: Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and William Ockham* (Oxford, 2010).

Marshall explains an identity statement by reflecting on the different ways of using the term 'is'. "Asserting the identity of one thing with another is among the irreducibly basic uses of the term 'is'" (p. 5). In Marshall's account, the 'is' of identity fundamentally differs from the 'is' of predication. In the former, the word 'is' simply asserts an identity between two things; in the latter, the word 'is' is used to attribute a property or characteristic to something.

With some acknowledged anachronism, Marshall invokes Quine as the authority for this basic distinction, and following Quine he suggests that the distinction is plausibly consistent with, and even rooted in, Aquinas, who described an assertion of identity as one in which "whatever is predicated of one is predicated of the other."[11] I don't think this particular passage can support the point Marshall, or Quine, want to take from it. In the quoted passage, Aquinas is not saying that an *identity statement* is one whose *two terms* (subject and predicate) have the *same referent*; he is saying instead that two *things can be identified* when those *two things* can receive all the *same predicates*. The passage provides no basis for thinking that Aquinas is defining "the 'is' of identity" or that he would distinguish identity statements from predications; indeed it provides every evidence that Aquinas understands identity *in terms of* predication.

Even so, allowing that we *can* distinguish the "is of identity" from the "is of predication" as Quine and Marshall do, I only want to point out that not all philosophers *do* make this distinction, and not all philosophers think this distinction is *basic*. Arguably, this is a characteristically *modern* approach to analyzing the term "is", embedded in an essentially post-Frege/Russell manner of analyzing the semantic functions of language.[12] It only begs the question to assert that an "is of identity" is "an irreducibly basic" use of the term "is."

Aquinas would agree that "is" has different senses in different contexts, but he would unify those different senses and would not hesitate to interpret every kind of statement as a predication, that is, a statement reflecting that something *is in some way*. Aquinas would make a fundamental distinction between kinds of statements, then, based on fundamental distinctions between ways in which "is" is used, ways in which things can be said *to be*. So the most fundamental distinction between kinds of statements that Aquinas would start with is not between identity statements and predication statements, but between *substantial* predications and *accidental* predications.

At this point, one might wonder whether this distinction, between substantial and accidental predications, as articulated within the Aristotelian conceptual framework, is in fact somehow captured within the alternative modern conceptual framework of Frege, Russel and Quine, only by some other terminology. For Marshall's paper does depend on the standard modern distinction between particulars (or objects) and their characteristics (or properties [or

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[11] *ST* I, q. 40, a. 1, ob. 3, cited by Quine in *Word and Object*, p. 117.

[12] For more on the limits of a Fregean analysis of Thomistic concepts, see Joshua P. Hochschild, "Kenny and Aquinas on Individual Essences," *Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics* 6 (2006): 45-56. [Reprinted in *Medieval Scepticism and the Claim to Metaphysical Knowledge,* ed. Gyula Klima and Alex W. Hall (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2011), pp. 63-78.] http://faculty.fordham.edu/klima/SMLM/PSMLM6/PSMLM6.pdf

"concepts" for Frege]). "We can tell when we have a case of the 'is' of predication, as opposed to the 'is" of identity, when 'is' joins not two particulars, but a particular, which can exist on its own, and a property or characteristic, which cannot, but must belong to some particular" (11). Is it possible that "particular" here functions as an alternative word for *substance*, and "characteristic" as an alternative word for *accident*?

A moment's reflection will make it clear that the two sets of concepts cannot be interchanged. Consider the sentence, "Socrates is a man." Here, the predicate "man" would seem to function as a *characteristic* in the Fregean framework. But within the Thomistic framework "man" here does not function as an accident; Aquinas would take this as a paradigmatic case of substantial predication.

Further, consider the sentence, "man is an animal." In the Fregean categorization, this would seem to count as a predication, not an identity. However, the subject "man" is not obviously a particular; while Frege would analyze it as referring to a set of particulars, Aquinas would analyze it as signifying a species (something common, as opposed to particular).

Finally, consider the sentence, "absolute zero is the absence of molecular kinetic energy." It would seem that in the Fregean framework this is an identity statement. But does that mean that the subject and the predicate name "objects" or "particulars"? Whether they do or not, from the Aristotelian perspective the statement is not about substances, it is about a quality (temperature), which is an accident only having existing in substances. (Of course, within the Fregean framework, there are ways of accounting for the sentences otherwise than I have done here. But the point is that, for the Thomistic *metaphysical* distinction to be preserved within the Fregean *semantic* framework, one would have to acknowledge that *object* and *property* are not interchangeable with *substance* and *accident*.)

In general, the Fregean distinction between objects (or particulars) and properties (or characteristics) tends to collapse two sets of distinctions that Aristotle and Aquinas kept separate. The distinctions go all the way back to the beginning of Aristotle's *Categories*, where Aristotle notes that a being is either *said of* a subject or *not said of* a subject; and he also notes that a being is either *in* a subject or *not in* a subject. As these came to be understood, what is said of a subject is a *universal* (or a predicate), and what is not said of a subject is a *particular* (or a concrete subject); and what is in a subject is an *accident* (or something whose being is a modification of some other being), and what is not in a subject is a *substance* (or something which has being fully in its own right, and not merely as the modification or qualification of some other being).

As Aristotle noted, since these two distinctions are independent of each other, they overlap, so that everything can be classified according to a four-fold division of being (what came to be known as the ontological square), consisting of all the possible combinations of the two distinctions:

1. Socrates and his dog are particular substances (or substantial particulars).

2. Man and dog (the species, not the individual examples) are universal substances (or substantial universals).

3. Socrates' paleness and his dog's furriness are particular accidents (or accidental particulars).

4. Paleness and furriness (in general) are universal accidents (or accidental universals).

Apart from the language of the *Categories*, the difference between the accidental and substantial is perhaps best understood by considering processes of change (following the pedagogy of Aristotle's *Physics*). If a change involves some underlying substrate that is something in itself and remains so through the change, then it is an accidental change—the molding of clay from one shape into another. But if a change involves something changing into something else, then it is a substantial change—the embryo coming to be from the unfertilized egg, for instance, or water being converted into hydrogen and oxygen. We would not say that the unfertilized frog egg *remains as part of* the frog embryo, only with different qualities, nor that hydrogen and oxygen really just are water, only under a different set of accidents. The fact that the egg and the water do not survive the changes that produce the organism and the gases is an indication that the frog and the gases are not accidental beings, but substantial beings. By contrast, the fact that the frog remains even as it gets larger, or that the gases remain even as they get hotter, is an indication that getting larger or hotter are accidental changes, and that size and temperature are accidental beings depending for their existence on the substances they modify.

It is also from the *Physics* that we learn to understand accidental and substantial being as caused by forms. Forms, as Aristotle develops the notion, are the causes or principles by which things have being. Given the fundamental distinction between substantial and accidental being, there is a fundamental distinction to make between substantial and accidental form. A substantial form is what makes a substance to be the substance it is; an accidental form is what makes a substance to be modified in some way. It is important to note, then, that forms should not be understood merely as characteristics, properties, or attributes (all of which imply something static and dependent on something else). Forms are actualities, or powers on which other things depend to be what they are. A form is that by which something has its being. The causality of forms, substantial and accidental, is something notoriously difficult to capture within the Fregean language of objects and properties.[13]

The Fregean semantic framework, considered as an ontologically neutral semantic framework, may very well be able to capture these ideas, but without a lot of explicit work to make room for Aristotelian ideas, the Fregean framework tends to ignore and even disguise them. For the Fregean framework divides the world into objects and properties, and so it is no wonder that it divides statements into identity statements (joining two objects) and predications (joining a property to an object). This is simple and elegant, and in comparison with the Aristotelian framework it might seem especially attractive (especially for those, like Quine, with

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[13] Again, see Hochschild, "Kenny on Aquinas . . . ."

a taste for desert landscapes). But let us consider, if reality is divided as the Aristotelian envisions it into substantial and accidental beings, and if we account for such changes and the realities that result from them in terms of forms (substantial and accidental forms), and if we further use language to describe reality this way, with substantial and accidental predicates, then a very natural account of statements can and in fact did develop, which made a different "irreducibly basic" set of assumptions about the function of "is". We call this account the inherence theory of predication, since according to this theory, in a true proposition the predicate signifies a *form* which really inheres in the subject: "Socrates is a man" is true if and only if *humanity*, the form signified by the predicate "man," is in Socrates; since humanity is a substantial form, the statement is true if and only if Socrates has the substantial being of a man—which is to say, if such a substantial form is causing there to be a substance, Socrates. "Socrates' dog is furry" is true if and only if *furriness*, the form signified by the predicate "furry," is in Socrates' dog; since furriness is an accidental form, it inheres in Socrates' dog if and only if Socrates' dog (a substance) is caused by it to be in some way, namely furry.[14]

Without trying to defend the Aristotelian metaphysical and semantic framework, I will simply note that it is not automatically captured within the Fregean framework which distinguishes between identity statements, asserting that one object is another object, and predication statements, attributing a characteristic to an object. For, within the Aristotelian framework:

- not every predicate is an accident ("Socrates is a man")

- subjects of predication are not all particulars ("man is an animal")

- subjects of predication are not all substances ("white is a color")

- identity statements don't have to be made only about particulars ("man is a rational animal")

- identity statements don't have to be made only about substances ("absolute zero is the absence of molecular energy")

Of course, it is possible to analyze each of the five sentences I have given here within a Fregean framework, but doing so would not necessarily lead the Fregean framework to have to recognize that, and indeed could allow the Fregean framework to continue to avoid facing the

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[14] The Aristotelian semantic framework, with its reference to forms, is itself also in principle ontologically neutral and does not require commitment to anything beyond a sparse nominalist metaphysics; on various strategies for preserving ontological modesty within this semantic framework, see Gyula Klima, "Ontological Alternatives vs. Alternative Semantics in Medieval Philosophy: A Philosophical Study of Some Mediaeval Theories of Signification and Mental Representation and their Bearing on Contemporary Problems in Cognitive Science," S-*European Journal for Semiotic Studies* 3 (1991): 587-618. http://faculty.fordham.edu/klima/ONTALT.HTM

fact that, the substance-accident distinction *differs* from the particular/universal distinction and from the object/property distinction.

That identity statements are not, within an Aristotelian framework, "irreducibly basic" can be further evident when we notice how Aquinas would interpret them. Unless they are simply acts of naming (where both subject and predicate are demonstratives or proper names), identity statements about particulars can themselves be analyzed in terms of the inherence of forms. Consider: "Sandra Marshall's husband is Nancy Marshall's firstborn son" (p. 5)—we could take *Sandra Marshall's husband* as the subject, and *Nancy Marshall's firstborn son* as a predicate, a complex predicate, signifying the form of firstborn sonship with respect to Nancy Marshall; the sentence is true, according to the inherence theory of predication, if that form (firstborn sonship with respect to Nancy Marshall) really inheres in the person named by "Sandra Marshall's husband." [15]

I have been trying to show that what Marshall's paper asserts are universal and basic (even irreducibly basic) semantic categories in fact belong to a particular school of thought; they are historically situated, contestable, and in fact contested. This clearly has relevance to theology, for precisely the reason Marshall gave so much attention to the semantic implications of theological assertions in the first place. Consider the three fundamental assertions of Christian faith discussed by Marshall:

Jesus Christ is true God.[16]

The Son of the Father is the Son of Mary.[17]

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[15] So, to be precise, Aquinas can and does distinguish between "predication by identity" and "predication by inherence" (or "predication by information"), cf. *Super Sent*. III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, expos. Thus Aquinas can analyze the truth of affirmative propositions *both* in terms of the identity of the supposita of their terms, *and* in terms of the inherence of the form signified in those supposita (cf. *ST* I, q. 13, a. 12, corp.). From the logician's perspective, both accounts describe truth conditions, though from the metaphysical perspective the inherence of the form in the object is causally responsible for the truth of the identity analysis. So a Thomistic approach to analyzing statements differs from a Fregean approach, not by *refusing to distinguish* identity and (other, non-identity) predicative claims, but by treating the distinction between identity claims and predicative claims *as equally viable and compatible semantic analyses of any true propositions* rather than as two irreducibly different and mutually exclusive logical forms of statements.

[16] Actually, given the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity, it is not clear that this can be analyzed as an *identity* statement, in either Quine's sense (where "Jesus Christ" and "God" are distinct names of exactly the same item) nor in Aquinas's sense of an assertion of identity (where Jesus Christ and God can receive all the same predicates). One could allow that "Jesus Christ is true God" is an identity statement in the way that, as Aquinas notes (and as described in the previous note) any true affirmation identifies the supposita of the subject and predicate terms, where supposition depends on the context of that affirmation—but then it is trivial to call any affirmation, doctrinal or otherwise, an identity statement! This particular problem with interpreting "Jesus Christ is true God" as an identity statement I will not pursue further.

[17] Given that "Son of Mary" implies the doctrine of the Incarnation without the doctrine of the Trinity while "Son of God" can imply the doctrine of Trinity without implying the doctrine of the Incarnation, this proposition is also difficult to analyze as an "identity statement" in any meaningful sense, for the kinds of reasons given in the previous note. Again, I will leave such difficulties aside.

This is my body.

If one starts by interpreting these as identity statements in the modern sense, one only has to have an adequate enough grasp of the referents of the subject and predicate to assert that those referents coincide. But if analyzed according to the classical inherence theory of predication, one does not only have to say that the referents are the same, but one has to give an account of why, and reflect on how it is possible: Jesus Christ is true God on account of the fact that divinity is in Jesus Christ. The Son of the Father is the Son of Mary because the Son of the Father has sonship with respect to Mary. "This is my body" is true if and only if *this* (the consecrated host) has a very special form, the form of Christ's own bodiliness.

What I hope to have shown so far is that the analysis of the Eucharist in Professor Marshall's paper depends on particular assumptions not only about metaphysics but about semantics, and that these assumptions were not the assumptions of Aquinas nor, we can assume, of the Lateran, Tridentine, or later Catholic affirmations about Eucharistic presence. In itself, this is only an observation about, not a criticism of, the analysis presented by Marshall. There is nothing that prohibits the words of Aquinas (or of councils, or of popes—or even of Christ Himself; for it is His words that are ultimately at stake here) from being analyzed according to a semantic framework other than those presumed by the one uttering them. Marshall, aware of and anticipating objections to his use of Quine to interpret Aquinas, observes that two interlocutors need not accept each other's semantic assumptions in order to correctly understand and interpret each other. "The explicit semantic claims of a speaker or author, if he makes any, need not be accepted in order to arrive at a correct interpretation of what he says" (p. 6).

Marshall is correct. However, if one is to take words uttered by a speaker whose context implied (or whose explicit theory articulated) one set of semantic assumptions, and if one analyzes those words according to a very different set of semantic assumptions, one should do so with good reason, and with awareness that one is doing so, and with some understanding of how one's own analysis may or may not capture what was intended by whoever originally uttered the analyzed statements. In other words, for a fair interpretation and evaluation of another's views, one need not *accept* alternative semantic assumptions, but one must *understand* those alternative assumptions, understand how they differ from one's own assumptions, and show awareness of what might be lost or gained by adopting the one set of assumptions over the other.[18] This is especially true if we share Marshall's intention "to follow closely . . . the logic of established Church teaching on transubstantiation" (p. 5).

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[18] Given that the semantic assumptions of Aquinas and Quine are, or at least can be construed as, ontologically neutral, Marshall even asserts that "it should be possible to articulate Aquinas's account of what the Eucharist is in Quinian (or other post-Fregean) semantic terms" (p. 7). This too is correct, but if an attempted reconstruction of Aquinas's account of the Eucharist fails to account for certain key aspects of Aquinas's account then it is not in fact an adequate reconstruction. At the very least, an adequate reconstruction of Aquinas's metaphysical account of the Eucharist in a Quinian semantic framework would have to allow that "substantial forms" are objects of discourse.

4. Saint Thomas Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Eucharist

Let us at this point recall the three kinds of question about Eucharistic presence: (1) its fact, (2) its mode of being, and (3) its coming to be. Marshall starts with attention to the first question, and moves to the third. Notably, there is very little direct attention in Marshall's paper to the second question; at least, if part of the paper is meant to address that question, it does so in a way that does not dwell on different metaphysical possibilities for the way that Christ can exist in the Eucharist.

Aquinas, for his part, takes it for granted that to affirm the fact of Eucharistic presence (in q. 75, a. 1) is to affirm it as substantial presence—since Christ's body is a substance!—and so he next addresses the kind of *change* that would lead to it (Marshall's third question) (in q. 75, a. 2ff), after which he explores further the details of Christ's substantial presence (the *manner of presence*—Marshall's second question) (in q. 76). Aquinas is not merely following a temporal order. As reflected in Aristotle's method in the *Physics*, it makes sense to come to a better understanding of the principles and natures of things by attending to the kinds of changes that produce them; and as we have seen, we best understand substance and accident by first attending to different kinds of changes that produce them. Pedagogically, then, Aquinas moves from an affirmation of Christ's substantial presence (implied immediately by the fact of Christ's presence), to a richer appreciation of what that substantial presence entails, though consideration of the manner of change that produces it.

Thus what I find largely missing from Marshall's account is what I take to be central to Aquinas's discussion, and that is Christi's *substantial* presence in the Eucharist. If the consecrated host is a substance, and that substance is Christ, then much of the rest of what Aquinas teaches about Eucharistic presence and conversion follows quite naturally from the notion of substantial (as opposed to accidental) presence.

To capture the Thomistic emphasis on substantial presence, speaking only of "real presence" is inadequate. There are *realities* which are *accidental*—sweetness is really present in the apple. The point of substantial presence is that the substantial form of Christ's body is present; but if it is present, and the substantial form of X is that by which X is X, then Christ's body is present; and since the substance that is Christ's body is the substance that is Christ, it means that Christ Himself is present; and not merely present in, and as a modification of, something else (for that would make it an accident), but present itself, the something else that was there before the new presence having been transformed into that substance, Christ Himself.

I can hear the objection now, that it is simply overstepping, for me (or for Aquinas, whose reasoning this is), to interpret the doctrine of *transubstantiation* as employing the notion of substance in this precise, technical Aristotelian sense. Couldn't the "substance" of "transubstantiation" only mean something like "very real," or "wholly present"? Indeed, it is common for Catholic theologians, in the course of defending the teaching on transubstantiation—and even in the course of articulating the views of Aquinas—to play down

the meaning of "substance," and suggest that it need not be taken in any precisely Aristotelian way. Thus Robert Barron glosses "substance" as "that underlying and essentially invisible substrate that constitutes the deepest identity of a given thing." He continues: "If this talk of substance and accident still seems puzzling, I would suggest that we translate the terms into the more straightforward 'reality' and 'appearance.'"[19]

Likewise, Marshall goes to some length to suggest that the doctrine of transubstantiation is not meant to imply a technical metaphysical claim or even any particular scheme of metaphysical concepts. "The Council of Trent evidently uses the term 'substance' not in a way you have to have mastered Aristotle's *Metaphysics* to understand, but in a simple and basic sense, what could be called an ordinary language meaning of the term" (p. 17).

To this my first response is that, given the fragmentary nature of modern philosophy and culture, there just is no "ordinary language meaning" of the term "substance" today. Different linguistic communities use the term differently (or, more likely, not at all)—and, if my "disquieting suggestion" is correct, some specialized language communities might use it incoherently precisely because it has become wholly disconnected from an original "ordinary language" sense which has now been lost. The fact that the language community of the Church insists on the notion of "transubstantiation" (not merely "real presence") is itself significant, and by it the Church is committed to some meaning of "substance," whether technically Aristotelian or not. Given the loss of a general consensus about the meaning of that term—and indeed, given the general neglect of that term, both by philosophers and others in the modern era—we should not lightly assume that we can recapture its meaning simply by sounding our untutored intuitions.

Note further that this point stands even if I fully accept Marshall's assertion that "Trent's chapters and canons on the Eucharist do not use the term 'substance' in a technical way, nor do they mandate, or even invoke, any particular metaphysical construal of the concept of substance" (16). If indeed there once was a richer, and more specific sense of substance that now is lost, or at least is difficult to recover, this is as much a matter of a common, every day sense of substance as of some professional and technical philosophical sense; for once upon a time the technical philosophical sense would have been continuous with, and grown from an elaboration of, a common everyday sense.[20] The situation which we find is not that one of these (the common,

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[19] Robert Barron, *Eucharist* (Orbis Books, 2008), pp. 120-121.

[20] The allegation that "substance" is a term of technical metaphysics is itself a legacy of late medieval and early modern debates that eventually led to the neglect of substance in later technical philosophy; before then, the notion of substance was taken seriously by philosophers *because* it was taken seriously *in an ordinary sense*. Here is Pasnau on the four centuries of transition from medieval to modern thought: "When studied in conjunction they put on display what is perhaps the fundamental issue in metaphysics: the choice one faces between either pursuing ontological parsimony or vindicating our ordinary ways of conceiving the world. The usual program of the Aristotelian scholastics is to pursue the second at the expense of the first, and so one finds among the Aristotelians a vast and exotic ontology of actualities and potentialities, all designed to allow us to make sense of the world as it seems to be—a world of extended, finite substances, cohering and enduring through time, variously colored and shaped, capable of interacting in complex ways with other substances. The usual post-scholastic program, in contrast, pursues parsimony at the expense of explanatory adequacy, and so dismantles large segments of the

everyday sense) remains accessible and the other (technical sense) does not; *both* have become obscured to the modern view.

At one point, citing Tridentine discussions on the Eucharist, Marshall suggests that the key term in Eucharistic doctrine is "conversion," and that the term "transubstantiation," and by extension the notion of "substance," are not particularly crucial to formulating correct doctrine (p. 17). In terms of the surface grammar of the relevant texts, I am sure that he is right, but the question at stake cannot be entirely settled by citing authors from the sixteenth century or earlier who insist that they find "conversion" an adequate term. For it may be that the reason *they* could hold that terms like "substance" or "transubstantiation" did not add anything essential to the doctrine of Eucharistic conversion was that *in their minds* the doctrine of Eucharistic conversion *already implied* the (ordinary) sense of one substance changing into another. If that is the case, and if *we* in later centuries have *lost* an ordinary sense of substance and thus don't and can't think of bread and the body of Christ as substances in the way that Lateran and Tridentine theologians might have, then *in our minds* the general term "conversion" is *not* adequate to capture the fullness of Eucharistic doctrine conveyed by the more specific and explicit term "transubstantiation."

This has implications for even good-faith attempts to analyze substance. Marshall quite legitimately analyzes "whole substance" as "total reality." But without articulating some further metaphysical principles, is there any way to specify what is included in this "totality" or "whole"? Aquinas would say that the *whole* of the bread includes matter and form, and would explain further the sense in which matter and form are involved in a *substantial* whole, thus requiring him to further explain why the matter doesn't remain, why the form isn't annihilated, etc. But if one (implicitly or explicitly) assumed different metaphysical principles constituent of the whole or total reality of the bread, one would be led to very different conclusions. The "total reality," and thus "whole substance," of bread would receive quite different analyses from Democritus or Empedocles.[21]

To be sure, even within fully Thomistic usage the term "substance" is not univocal; it is flexible in Aristotle not only as he inherits it from everyday Greek, but as he develops it in the *Categories*, *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. Yet "substance" is always something primary. Even as our understanding of it moves from something more common and primary in the order of knowledge (as in the *Categories*) to something more removed from the senses and primary in the order of reality (as in the *Metaphysics*), the notion of "substance" in the Aristotelian sense always retains this sense of existing on its own, not in or depending on something else.

Aristotelian framework. The result is an austerely reductive ontology of bodies in motion—an ontology that makes it nearly impossible to account for much of our commonsense worldview of enduring substances" (*Metaphysical Themes*, 6).

[21] For an example of a theologian bringing his own alternative metaphysical principles to bear, see Germain Grisez, "An Alternative Theology of Jesus' Substantial Presence in the Eucharist," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 65 (2000): 111-131. http://itq.sagepub.com/content/65/2/111.full.pdf. For a diagnosis of this problem in Grisez's analysis, showing that it does not constitute a criticism of Aquinas, see Stephen L. Brock, "St. Thomas and the Eucharistic Conversion," *The Thomist* 65 (2001): 529-65. http://bib26.pusc.it/fil/p_brock/eucharist.pdf.

The evidence is very strong that even this focal sense of "substance" is no longer an "ordinary language meaning of the term"—certainly not today. Consider how hard it is for us to give good examples of *substances* in a way that Aristotle would recognize. Contemporary philosophers, offering examples of basic objects or "substances," typically talk about chairs or lecterns. (I guess we know where they spend their time.) Marshall's example of substantial change is telling—it is not a common sense, easily understandable example, but one based on what we all now regard as outdated science, cited apparently only because it was an example in Aquinas: air changing into fire.[22] Is it so hard to identify a plain, uncontroversial, and illustrative example of substantial change from common experience (such as the unfertilized egg becoming an organism), from geology (as the example of metamorphic rock given earlier), or from modern chemistry (say, electrolysis of water into hydrogen and oxygen)?

In the Aristotelian sense, the paradigmatic substances are living things, which have their own intrinsic unity, and after that other natural things which also have their own integrity or nature. For Aristotle, artificial things like chairs or lecterns have their unity qua man-made objects only incidentally, and so *they are not substances*. They are, instead, accidental arrangements of substances. In general, art does not generate substantial form, but communicates accidental forms to pre-existing substances.

Perhaps it wouldn't matter that we don't understand substances exactly as *Aristotle* did, so long as we had some *other* "common sense" notion of substance. But I doubt we really do have such a notion. And even if we did, *Aristotle's* way of articulating the notion of substance does matter if we at least want to follow *Aquinas's* arguments, for his exposition of the Lateran formulation of transubstantiation *does* in fact depend on the technical Aristotelian account of substance, as a being that is what it is by substantial form. Consider Aquinas's argument: that accidents need to be sustained by God if they are to remain the same, because accidents are otherwise individuated by their substances; or that the substantial form of bread does not remain, because there is no matter for it to inhere in, since whatever matter is there in the Eucharist is actuated by the substantial form of Christ; not to mention the complicated arguments about quantity and the manner in which accidents remain despite the change in substance.

Admittedly such arguments may appear obscure and highly abstract—hardly seeming to bear on what theologians and the faithful should primarily care about in expounding the Eucharist. But the notion of substance is intrinsically linked to other of Aquinas's arguments as well, more obviously central to faith and worship:

- That the whole person of Christ is present, body, soul and divinity.

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[22] In conversations at the symposium at which these papers were originally presented, there was extended discussion about whether the example of gold coins being changed into a gold chalice counted as substantial change. David S. Oderberg gives the destruction of a stone wall as an example of substantial change (*Real Essentialism* [Routledge, 2005], p. 73). That such obvious examples of accidental change would seem to some to be possible candidates for substantial change is itself evidence of the loss of the once common-sense Aristotelian distinction between substance and accident.

- That the Eucharist is worthy of *latria*.

- That Eucharistic conversion, given its difference from mundane substantial change, can only take place by a direct action of God.

To follow the Thomistic understanding of the Eucharist, then, we cannot trust that the modern mind will naturally, on its own and without training, draw on the relevant notion of "substance" that Aquinas might have presumed.

In making this historical claim, however, perhaps I have revealed a vulnerability in relying too heavily on Aristotelian language. The objection is obvious: aren't bread and wine artificial things? Aren't they man-made? If so, then it would be wrong to try to deploy the Aristotelian sense of *substance* in analyzing the matter of Eucharistic conversion? If we have to call a change "the conversion of one substance into another substance," and we know that that change starts with what is technically, from an Aristotelian perspective, an artificial and therefore accidental thing, then it makes no sense to push the Aristotelian notion of substance into service any further.

This would be a devastating objection, except for one fact: bread and wine are not artificial—or at least, they are not purely artificial. Aquinas himself considers this objection at q. 75, a. 6, obj. 1 (the form of bread is accidental since it is artificial). His response is that it is possible for art to produce a substantial form, not by its own power, but by the power of a natural principle (q. 75, a. 6, ad 1). Some art is not merely the rearrangement of given matter which leaves that matter essentially as it was, but the manipulation of chemical or biological processes, so that nature, and not artifice, produce a new thing. Given the chemical reactions between the flour and water, and the further changes that take place due to the baking of the dough, the "making" of bread is more like a breeder "making" a new animal than like the carpenter making a table. The form of bread is not an accidental form, imposed on a substance which persists through the making of the bread; it is a substantial form, making what was once something else (flour, water) to be a new substance, bread.

This clarification that bread counts as an Aristotelian substance (as does wine, for analogous reasons—fermentation being a process by which nature changes grape juice into something else), is significant for Aquinas's analysis of transubstantiation. Note that the question of whether bread is a substance does not need to arise (and as far as I know does not arise) if transubstantiation is taken only as a fancy term equivalent to "change resulting in the real presence." Indeed, the notion of "real presence" does not, of itself, emphasize the miraculous nature of God's action in the Eucharist the way "transubstantiation" does. If Eucharistic conversion isn't the real change of one substance into another substance, then any other account, even of a "reality" or "real presence," could in principle be reduced to dependence on human action, individual or communal. The presence of Christ could be real but accidental; it could be real but artificial; it could real but subjective; it could be real but dependent on human minds. (The danger of the language of symbol, from a Catholic perspective, is that the reality of the

symbol seems to depend not only on the reality of what is symbolized but on the presence of the one who perceives the symbol as a symbol.) The language of *substance* emphasizes that what exists before and after the conversion is real *and independent of us*; the language of *transubstantiation* emphasizes that the conversion is *in no way natural but entirely dependent on God's direct action*.[23]

5. Metaphysics, Semantics, and Ecumenism

Marshall ends his paper by contrasting the approach of Aquinas with that of Scotus; both affirmed the truth of transubstantiation as a *de fide* truth, but while Aquinas defended it with philosophical arguments as the only available account, Scotus allowed the logical possibility of other metaphysical analyses (impanation, or consubstantiation, and annihilation).

It is worth noting that Marshall mostly describes these as attempts of Scotus to articulate alternative metaphysical accounts of *real presence*, when in fact they are much stronger than that. Unlike later Protestant thinkers, Scotus is still attempting to articulate alternative accounts of *substantial presence*.[24] Viewed in historical context, at stake in Scotus's disagreement from Aquinas is not some general question about whether philosophy can come up with alternative theories of real presence, irrespective of what we know by faith to be true; rather, what is at stake is a very particular issue about the true nature of substance, its relation to accidents, and what the being of substances and the being of accidents do or do not entail.

Marshall presents Scotus's strategy as more modest than Aquinas's. I believe Scotus's approach only seems more modest if we ignore the fact that Scotus didn't merely come to different answers to the same metaphysical questions that Aquinas raised. Scotus interpreted the Eucharist in terms of different metaphysical principles,[25] and he articulated his metaphysical principles according to different semantic assumptions (semantic assumptions that are arguably

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[23] See, for instance, *ST* III, q. 75, a. 4, ad 3.

[24] To be sure, in Scotus's analysis of the Eucharistic change, the emphasis is more on explaining substantial *presence* (the *coming to be present* of a [pre-existing] substance), rather than on substantial *conversion* (the *coming into being* of a substance from another substance). Thus the seeds of the later, more general attention presence, to the neglect of a more specific attention to the notion of the presence of *substance*, are already present in Scotus's account. See David Burr, *Eucharistic Presence and Conversion in Late Thirteenth-Century Franciscan Thought,* Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 74, part. 3 (Philadelphia, 1984); also Irène Rosier-Catach and Alain de Libera, "Les enjeux logico-linguistiques de l'analyse de la formule de la consécration eucharistique ," *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen Age Grec et Latin* 67 (1997): 33-77.

[25] In Pasnau's account, Scotus's treatment of the Eucharist was part of a larger project of reinterpreting the ontological status of accidents and their relation to substance; of Scotus's strategy, Pasnau says, "not only does it attempt to end one line of thought, but it also sets another line of thought in motion…. Scotus forced subsequent generations to reexamine just where accidents were needed, and where they could be dispensed with" (*Metaphysical Themes*, 197). Giorgio Pini argues that, with his recharacterization of substance, accident, and their relation, ". . . Scotus comes as close as possible to drop the distinction between substance and absolute accidents, on which a large part of Aristotle's metaphysics is based." Pini, "Substance, Accident, and Inherence: Scotus and the Paris Debate on the Metaphysics of the Eucharist," in Boulnois, Karger, Solère and Sondag, eds., *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302-2002* (Brepols, 2004), pp. 273-311.

more Fregean than Thomistic[26]). There may still seem to be something more modest (or at least more Protestant) for the resulting understanding of the relationship between faith and reason, but this result is incidental and arguably unintentional on Scotus's part. The general strategy of rejecting an inherited metaphysical tradition and positing alternative, novel metaphysical principles within an alternative semantic framework does not, in itself, seem particularly modest to me, and in fact strikes me as quite the opposite.[27] At the very least, whatever Scotus's intention, the legacy of his strategy seems to be to distance us from even being able to understand Thomistic metaphysical principles and the Thomistic semantic framework. This distance has serious costs for achieving understanding not only between Catholic and other traditions, but within the Catholic tradition itself: the legacy of Scotus (and of other late medieval thinkers who articulated alternative conceptions of substance and related principles) makes it difficult to fully participate, by faith as well as by reason, in the Church's traditional understanding of Eucharistic presence as transubstantiation.

In closing, then, I want to return to the issue of ecumenism which motivates Marshall's paper. There are times in ecumenical dialogue when the wise thing to do is search for common ground where it already exists, and that can mean setting aside areas of disagreement. But there are also times when it is important to articulate the areas of disagreement and see if the parties can be brought to partial, and even fuller, agreement.[28] Sometimes particular areas of disagreement require further clarifying whether what seems like a disagreement really is in fact an area where different language is used to express fundamentally the same ideas. Other times it may be an area where language is being used so differently that the alternative claims are incommensurable more than opposing—that is, an area where the parties can't yet even understand each other because their differences are in fact a matter of confusion that does not even rise to the level of disagreement. The former kind of disagreement we are used to calling "merely semantic"—it is superficial, and easily cleared up by defining terms. The latter kind of disagreement-*cum*-confusion might also be called semantic, but in a deeper, more substantive

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[26] Giorgio Pini, "Scotus on Assertion and the Copula: A Comparison with Aquinas." In *Medieval Theories on Assertive and Non-Assertive Language*. Acts of the 14th European Symposium on Medieval Logic and Semantics, Rome, June 11–15, 2002, ed. A. Maierù and L. Valente (Firenze: Olschki, 2004): 307-331. http://faculty.fordham.edu/pini/pini/Blank_files/Assertion%20and%20Copula.pdf. It is also fair to say that Scotus has a different conception of how we *know* substances. Giorgio Pini, "Scotus on Doing Metaphysics *in statu isto*," in *John Duns Scotus, Philosopher,* ed. Mary B. Ingham and Oleg Bychkov, *Archa Verbi. Subsidia* 3 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2010): 29-55. http://faculty.fordham.edu/pini/pini/Blank_files/ScotusMetaphysics.pdf.

[27] As Giorgio Pini describes, Aquinas took transubstantiation as a miraculous exception, and so made a small accommodation in Aristotelian metaphysics for non-inhering accidents; by contrast Scotus, in his mature view, took transubstantiation as the rule, in light of which he offered entirely new views on the metaphysical principles at stake. "So Scotus's attitude seems to be quite the opposite of Thomas Aquinas's. According to Scotus, we do not have to accommodate what looks like as an exception to the framework of an ontology built on independent grounds. Instead, we must start from the alleged exceptions in order to build an ontology based on them, because these alleged exceptions reveal the way in which things are according to their essence and not according to the contingent order which we currently experience." Pini, "Substance, Accident, and Inherence."

[28] Matthew Levering addresses the significance of the metaphysics of transubstantiation for Catholic-Orthodox and Catholic-Protestant dialogue in Matthew Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (Blackwell, 2005), esp. ch. 4, "Transubstantiation".

way—it involves the lack of a shared conceptual framework within which coherent disagreement can even be formulated.

It is a salutary development that so many Protestant denominations are now willing to affirm the real presence of Christ. But given how alien the notion of substance is in modern discourse, and how central it is for so much of Catholic theology (natural and revealed), it seems to me that what we face in making sense of the Catholic teaching on transubstantiation is this deep kind of conceptual confusion, a confusion that agreement about "real presence" does not on its own address, and may even obscure. What is needed to overcome the confusion is long and difficult conversations aimed at a recovery of the notion of substance—not, initially, to persuade people of the truth of Catholic teaching on transubstantiation, but simply to make available the understanding of, and the possibility of accepting or rejecting, Catholic teaching on transubstantiation.

There is not one way to effect such conceptual recovery, and it will require a creative and multi-faceted approach. Consider again, for comparison, MacIntyre's recovery of the notion of "virtue". Was the notion he wanted to recover a technical philosophical term, or a common, everyday term? It was both—and thus had to be explored both in literature and everyday usage as well as in theorists like Aristotle and Aquinas. Could the notion of virtue be easily translated into some other terminology, like the language of rights, or duty, or law? Not really—but it takes some work to see how alternative conceptions of "morality" fall short of capturing what is implied by virtue. Can the notion of virtue be recaptured simply by repeating and reasserting it? Again, not really—consider MacIntyre's articulations of the notions of a practice, of a narrative unity of life, of a human *telos*. The argument of *After Virtue* was multifaceted, drawing on a variety of modes of discourse, observation, and analysis. The notion of substance may need similar treatment if it is to be rehabilitated as a live and operative notion, and the doctrine of transubstantiation—as well as the practical observance of that doctrine, in prayer, devotion, and participation in the liturgy—may be one valuable locus for the work of helping recover a conception of what it is for something to be a substance.[29]

In making that claim, it may sound like I have hijacked a theological issue for philosophical ends, as if I am not so much appealing to substance in order to articulate and

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[29] As Anscombe's famous essay on transubstantiation suggests, perhaps it is not that metaphysics will help us get the worship right, but that worship will help us get the metaphysics right. G. E. M. Anscombe, "On Transubstantiation," *The Collected Philosophical papers of G. E. M. Anscombe*, Vol. III, *Ethics, Politics and Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), pp. 107-12. http://www.secondspring.co.uk/articles/anscombe.htm. I also allow that the word "substance" itself might be a distraction here, precisely because it seems like a technical term, belonging to a professionalized and specialized academic vocabulary. What I'm after is not *per se* the rehabilitation of a term, but an awakening to a basic notion, a basic category of reality (what Anscombe's child can grasp without having studied philosophy or theology). Still, we must use words to get at this concept, and I am not aware of an alternative, better word for the concept at stake than "substance"; and then, discussing the doctrine of the Eucharist, in an academic context, it is difficult not to have recourse to the intellectual tradition that does help us articulate that conception and show how it differs from other conceptions of reality. Use of the term "substance" and the appeal to Aristotle thus seem inescapable, even in trying to argue that modern ways of thinking might be confused about, or even missing, a basic, non-technical conceptual category for interpreting reality.

defend Christian teaching, but appealing to Christian teaching in order to elicit anew a lost notion of substance. In fact what I propose involves elements of both. For much indeed rests on the notion of substance which is important for Christian faith; the Christian vision of creation and its relationship to God, of agency and transcendence, of the human condition and salavation history, is difficult to articulate apart from the notion of substance.

But it should also be remembered that the Church's teaching on transubstantiation, far from being an attempt to fit a theological mystery into historically contingent and academic philosophical categories, is in fact an attempt to articulate a theological mystery in terms of the true categories of reality. The fact that those categories—especially the notion of substance – are so alien to us, so awkward for us to use and so difficult for us to understand, suggests that at this point in history Catholic teaching on the Eucharist—while in its own right important for ultimate and spiritual reasons—also serves a general pedagogical purpose: reminding us of the necessity of recovering a vision of reality that has been lost and obscured by very different, modern assumptions and philosophical categories.