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The Meaning and Function of System in Theology

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ABSTRACT

THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF

SYSTEM IN THEOLOGY

by

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Adviser: Fernando Canale

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

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Title: THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF SYSTEM IN THEOLOGY

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Topic

Due to the nature of the discipline, the importance of our understanding of the meaning of the term "system" in systematic theology cannot be gainsaid. Unfortunately, however, there seems to be little discussion or critique to how this term is being used and its meaning is often taken for granted, even though it seems to mean different things to different authors.

Purpose

To address this ambiguity, this study takes a close look at the etymological development of this word in its various linguistic forms as it has been used in theology through history. Then, based on this etymological analysis, an intensional definition is proposed with analysis of each element represented in that definition (whole, parts, and articulation) to clarify the meaning of

this term as it has been used in theology. Finally, from that definition and its isolated elements, an instrument of analysis (the architectonic analysis) is designed and applied to two examples of theological systems to demonstrate the function of this idea in theology.

Sources

For the etymological survey, this study focused primarily on theological and philosophical works in history that address the meaning of the word "system" with its Greek (συστημα) and Latin (*systema*) roots. These sources begin with the introduction of the word into theological usage with Bartholomew Keckermann's *Systema logicae* (1600) and trickle off shortly after Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), with particular attention to John Heinrich Lambert, Immanuel Kant, and Soren Kierkegaard. In additional to my own bibliographical research, I was indebted to Otto Ritschl's *System und systematische Methode in der Geschichte des wissenschaftlichen Sprachgebrauchs und der philosophischen Methodologie* (1906). For the application of the architectonic analysis on specific examples, I chose the iconic works of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* and Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*.

Conclusions

After applying the architectonic analysis to the works of Aquinas and Barth, the definition proposed—'A theological system is a cognitive whole of articulated theological doctrines'—was found adequate to account for the structures represented by the *Summa Theologica* and *Church Dogmatics*. That is, based on the meaning of system as it is used in theology, these two works can confidently be called "systems." Also, in addition to confirming the meaning of this word and demonstrating its function in these great works, the architectonic analysis proposed here exposed the essential element of a conditioning, transcendental principle

in anything properly called a system. That is, a system will always include at least one independent, necessary part, which provides the basis for both the whole expected and the articulation of its parts. Additionally, reminiscent of Gödel's incompleteness theorem, this part is axiomatic and transcendent, and can not be validated or invalidated by the system in which it is found, but separately, as a dependent part in a greater system.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF

SYSTEM IN THEOLOGY

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Timothy Watson

March 2012

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CD   Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*

LCL   Loeb Classical Library

LS   Liddell, H. G., and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford, 1940

LD   Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews'
        Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary*

ST   Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem

Beginning in the seventeenth century, systematic theology became an independent

discipline, owing its existence to the introduction of the concept of "system" into

theology.[1] Not that there was no "systematic" theology before that time, but only that

"system" terminology was not used in this context.[2] And shortly after its debut, the term

"system" became a familiar, if not pervasive element in the titles and labels given to

expressions of theology and philosophy.[3] In spite of its popularity in early modern and

enlightenment periods, however, its usage and significance in the titles and discussions of

methodology have waned in theology and philosophy since the end of the nineteenth

century. But there seems to remain a residual tendency to use "system" terminology in

many theological circles, and many institutions with departments of theology still refer to

these departments as "department of systematic theology."

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[1] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science,* trans. Francis
McDonagh (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 404; Gerhard Ebeling, *The Study of
Theology,* trans. Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 125; Otto Weber,
Foundations of Dogmatics, trans. Darrell L. Guder, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
1981), 1:51.

[2] Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics*, 1:53.

[3] See Appendix.

Therefore, the meaning of the term "system" is undoubtedly important in the considerations of the overall mission of these departments and the expected outcomes of their students. Put in another way, if there are going to be whole departments in colleges and graduate institutions committed to the discipline of "systematic theology," it behooves us as participants in this enterprise to be clear about what a "system of theology" actually is.

Unfortunately, however, there is little discussion in contemporary theology concerning the actual meaning or function of the term "system" in this context. In fact, not since the decline of the popularity of this terminology at the end of the nineteenth century has there been much discussion at all of its meaning in theology.[4] As a result, there is either a diversity of perspectives on the meaning and function of "system" in theology, or a lack of understanding altogether. But as pointed out above, this lack of precision does not keep theological discourse from using the term to refer to almost any type of theological expression to the extent that the word "system" can be interchanged with less specific words like "expression," "work," "book," "discussion," etc. Thus, the meaning of the word "system" as it is used in this context is in danger of being diluted beyond usefulness.

Basic Approach of This Study

The main objective of this study is to address this lack of precision or clarity in the usage of the term "system" especially in theology. Now this objective can be advanced from more than one perspective. From a normative perspective an "official"

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[4] The one exception to this of course is Karl Barth whose treatment will be addressed in the chapter 4 here.

definition of the term "system" can be posited from a lexicon or even arbitrarily. As

such, expressions of theology could be evaluated accordingly whether and to what extent

they are systems. This study however will be advancing from a different perspective, that

of the phenomenological. That is, this study will be looking at the specific and various

usages of the term "system" in theology and philosophy and suggesting an intensional

definition, which clarifies the meaning of this term based on usage. Then from that,

individual expressions of theology can be evaluated in terms of the extent to which they

represent the intensional definition discussed and how the function of that idea is

demonstrated within.

Thus, specifically, this study will attempt to clarify the meaning and function of

the idea of system as it is used in theology. This will involve two secondary objectives:

(1) to conduct an analysis of the meaning of the term "system" as it is defined in

theological discourse, and (2) to investigate how the idea of system is employed in

specific examples of theological discourse.

In the first phase of this study, addressing the first objective above, the usage of

the word "system" in works dealing with (or related to) systematic theology and

theological method will be examined for clues or explanations regarding the meaning of

the word system as it is used in that context.[5] And, since it will involve expressions of

theology and philosophy from different time periods, this examination should reflect the

development aspect of the meaning and usage of terms and ideas.

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[5] Due to ambiguity in definition, this will include theological works not identified
as "systems" or "systematic theology" and even some works of philosophy when
appropriate.

Thus, the above examination will be an etymological survey of the usage of this term and its development over time. Then a working definition can be proposed based on recurring or common elements from the most informative of these clues and explanations. Before moving on to the second phase, however, it will be necessary to construct an instrument—the architectonic analysis—whereby the intensional definition proposed can be applied to specific examples in a way that the function of system can be demonstrated.

The second phase of this study involves the application of the instrument mentioned above to specific examples of works, which might be considered "systems" of theology. In this case, this will involve two examples of representative expressions of systematic theology: Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* and Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. In the analysis of each of these, the instrument mentioned above will be applied in such a way to determine whether the work is an appropriate example of system and how the individual elements of the definition of system play out within. Finally, these examples, after undergoing this focused analysis regarding their nature as "systems," should yield additional insight into the meaning and function of this integral idea to the discipline of theology.[6] And in the conclusion, from these insights, together with the initial intensional definition provided, a more precise definition can be proposed with special emphasis on whatever it is that makes an expression of theology a "system."

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[6] Here it should be noted that my conclusions will include elements essential to one's understanding of a "theological system" that were only hinted at in the first phase and because of their tentative nature at that point in the investigation are not included in the initial intensional definition therein. These 'new' elements which are briefly discussed in the first phase will be found to have solid demonstration in the two case studies, and, as such, should be added to a complete understanding of this term and are included in a revised definition provided in the conclusions.

Scope and Limitations

In the first phase dealing with the etymological development, there are specific limitations on the rise and decline of useful examples of contributions to the meaning of this term in this context. First, there is relative agreement that the term "system" was not employed as a methodological term in theology or philosophy before its introduction by Bartholomew Keckermann (1571–1609) at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[7] Therefore, this fact—the origin of this usage in this context—is established along with a brief discussion of prior considerations. Having done this, the writings of Keckermann are addressed specifically in terms of his usage of this term and its role in his various works. From there, the etymological survey can proceed in highlighting the most significant contributions or innovations in the meaning of the term "system" as it is used in subsequent expressions of theology and philosophy.

This historical–etymological analysis depends largely on the work of Otto Ritschl in his *System und systematische Methode in der Geschichte des wissenschaftlichen Sprachgebrauchs und der philosophischen Methodologie*. In this work, Ritschl surveys the usage of the term "system" and its Greek and Latin equivalents in theological, scientific, and philosophical discourse from the classical authors through to his own time at the turn of the twentieth century.

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[7] Otto Ritschl, *System und systematische Methode in der Geschichte des wissenschftlichen Sprachgebrauchs und der philosophischen Methodologie* (Bonn: Carl Georgi, Universitäts-Buchdruckerie und Verlag, 1906), 2–40; Pannenberg, *Theology*, 404; Ebeling, *The Study of Theology*, 125; Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics,* 1:51, 59.

Of course, Ritschl is not the only source on the history of the usage of this term, but there is no reason not to benefit from the work he has done, which serves as a valuable guide for identifying those theologians and philosophers who have made meaningful contributions to our understanding of this term in this context. Conversely, the section on the etymological development investigates possible gaps in terms of sources or points not covered in Ritschl's work in order to expand and improve our understanding of this phenomenon. In doing so, I will indicate when Ritschl is my sole source of information and seek to provide original sources or sources not used by Ritschl when possible. And, though Ritschl's survey concludes with the turn of the twentieth century, this is doubtless not the end of the story of system and a few points will be made about subsequent developments. However, it will be shown that the most fertile period of contributions to the meaning of this term in this context is over before the end of the nineteenth century.

Therefore, in that it covers over three centuries of theology and philosophy, this etymological survey is limited to those works that provide significant contribution to the meaning of the term system as it is used in theology. In other words, it is beyond the scope of this study to analyze any and every occurrence of the term "system" in theological discourse. This study focuses mainly on those statements in these contexts that contribute to the development of our understanding of the meaning of this term. And, due to the collaboration between the disciplines of theology and philosophy, especially during the period in focus, works of philosophy, which address the concept of system and are relevant to the usage of this term in theology, are explored as well.

In the second phase of this study the architectonic analysis is applied to specific examples of systematic theology. This phase focuses on two expressions of theology exclusively: the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas and the *Church Dogmatics* of Karl Barth. These examples were chosen for several reasons. First, each of these works has been generally accepted as comprehensive representations of theological systems. Second, Aquinas and Barth are considered by many to be major representatives of Classical (Aquinas) and Post-Classical (Barth) theology, respectively. Third, Aquinas and Barth are commonly held to be major representatives of Roman Catholic (Aquinas) and Protestant (Barth) Theology. And lastly, these two examples can serve as a 'control group' of sorts in that Aquinas never used the word "system" (*sustema*) in the context discussed here and Barth is one of the most articulate critics of this idea in theology.

Of course, the second phase of this study is meant to demonstrate the function of "system" in theological discourse and, as such, the analysis of these works (the *ST* and *CD*) will be limited inasmuch as the focus is not the work itself but the role of system within. This is accomplished through the application of the specific questions involved in the architectonic analysis regarding whether and to what extent each work fulfills the intensional definition provided and how each of the individual elements of that definition is represented thereby.

CHAPTER 2

THE MEANING OF "SYSTEM" IN THEOLOGY:

ETYMOLOGY AND DEFINITION

Overview and Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the meaning of the word "system" as it is

used in theology. The first step in this phase is a historical/etymological survey of the

development of this term in relevant publications. More specifically, this survey

examines the usage of the word "system" in theological (and relevant philosophical)

discourse, looking for clues or explanations regarding the meaning of the word system as

it is used in that context. And, as an etymological survey this focuses primarily on the

origin and development of the usage of this term in theology. Thus, as shown below, the

most relevant period of this development spans from the origin of this type of usage in

the beginning of the seventeenth century to its decline in popularity at the end of the

nineteenth, and these three centuries are the primary window of investigation in this

survey.

From this survey it should then be possible to propose a tentative intensional

definition of the term "system" as it is used in theology. In addition to a statement of

definition, however, the basic elements that should be present in anything properly called

a "system" can be isolated and discussed, again in light of the foregoing etymological

background. Then, these general elements of definition together can provide the basis for

an instrument of analysis and comparison, which should be applicable—synchronically or diachronically—to any theological system. And, though this cannot be conclusive until this claim has been tested on many examples, we should have a good start in the following chapters where this instrument is applied to the works of Aquinas and Barth as representative examples of system.

Historical and Etymological Development
of the Term "System" in Theology

Scope and Source Considerations

Before launching into the survey itself, I would like to note my criteria for which statements and personalities to highlight. Geo Siegwart, in the introduction to *Texte zur Systematologie und zur Theorie der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis*, points out that there are two types of usage of a term to be defined.[1] The first type of usage (*verwendet*) is in statements where the term in question is used but the definition is not explicit or it is assumed that the reader understands the meaning implied. The second type of usage (*eingeführt*) is any statement that explicates the meaning intended by the term as it is used in its immediate or larger context. This coincides with what is sometimes called *intensional* or *connotative* definition.[2] In the latter type of usage the author assumes nothing on the reader's part and attempts to supply all explanation needed to be completely understood when using a particular term. Except for only a few instances, the

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[1] Johann Heinrich Lambert, *Texte zur Systematologie und zur Theorie der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis*, ed. Geo Siegwart and Horst D. Brandt (Hamburg: Felix Mainer Verlag, 1988), xxxviii.

[2] Patrick J. Hurley, *A Concise Introduction to Logic* (Boston: Wadsworth Publishing, 2005), 96.

second type of usage mentioned above was the basis of the criterion that informed my selections in this survey.

Also, in choosing the sources of these statements, searching every work that might be relevant to find the key players and their statements can be overwhelming. For this, I am greatly indebted to Otto Ritschl's work mentioned in the previous chapter. Of course, this raises the question of redundancy or whether this survey is even necessary.

To the contrary, there are at least three reasons to go back over the ground covered by Ritschl in 1906. To begin with, the most obvious is that there is yet no English translation available. Secondly, there is very little critical discussion or commentary on the accuracy and usefulness of Ritschl's work in subsequent research. As a result, much of what is said about system in theology or philosophy takes Ritschl's conclusions somewhat for granted without challenge. And, though this might be a great flattery to Ritschl, it also belies a dangerous indifference to the historical context of such an important methodological trend.

Finally, there is the question of further developments and contributions in this subject in the century that has transpired since 1906. And, though there have been few significant innovations in the usage of this word since then, there have been considerable contributions in terms of secondary sources and expanded access to the primary sources. Actually, we have a helpful baseline for the need for a reconsideration of the scope of Ritschl's survey from his own pen, in a statement informing his readers that in the intervening time between the year 1600 and the publication of this work, there were ninety books on any topic that contained the word "system" in their titles.[3] In

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[3] Ritschl, *System*, 26.

contemporary bibliography one can find over 328 titles that include some form of this word published during that period.[4] Therefore, Ritschl's work, though a valuable resource, is only a starting point from which the survey conducted here can reconstruct an updated historical/etymological study of the term "system" in theology.[5]

<center>Bartholomew Keckermann and the Introduction
of the Word "System" into Theological
and Philosophical Methodology</center>

Among those who speak of the history of this term, there is a basic consensus that there was a shift in usage around the turn of the seventeenth century that was little less than a revolution in method, not only in theology, but also in philosophy and science.[6] In his introduction to *Theology and the Scientific Imagination: From the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*, Amos Funkenstien declares that during the period between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the seventeenth century, "the ideal of a system of our entire knowledge founded on one method was born."[7] More specifically, Bartholomew Keckermann (1571-1609) is considered to have provided the first notable application of this word to philosophy and theology.[8]

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[4] See Appendix.

[5] See p. 6.

[6] Nicholas Rescher, *Cognitive Systematization: A Systems-Theoretic Approach to a Coherentist Theory of Knowledge* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 5–6.

[7] Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 6.

[8] "The Latin term *systema* was widely used in Europe from the year 1600 onward as a title for systematic textbooks. Keckermann not only appears to have been one of the first post-medieval authors to use that term (his *System of Logic* was first published in the year 1599), but he is the only seventeenth-century author known to have discussed the meaning of that term in detail. . . . Keckermann was one of the earliest Western thinkers to use the term 'system' to describe academic treatises; his detailed discussion of the

This is not to say that theology was not systematic before Keckermann, far from it. What it says is that Keckermann is the first to explicitly associate the term 'system' with theology or philosophy. Alternately, it cannot be said that this was the first instance of the word in general, just in this context. Thus, before looking at Keckermann, it is necessary to examine the earlier usages of the word "system" in its Greek and Latin derivatives.

System before Keckermann

Among the classical Greeks the term σύστημα already had an extraordinary versatility of meaning. In Liddle and Scott's *Lexicon*, the word σύστημα is rendered as a "whole compounded of several parts or members."[9] But this term took on slightly different meanings in specific contexts. In philosophical anthropology it was used to describe the "composite whole of the soul and body."[10] In literary theory it denotes "composition."[11] In political theory it refers to an organized government, constitution,

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component parts of systematic textbooks appears to be the first of this kind and may have been without parallel during the entire seventeenth century" (Joseph S. Freedman, "The Career and Writings of Bartholomew Keckermann (d. 1609)," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 141, no. 3 [1997], 312, 323; "The term and phenomenon of a systematically constructed dogmatics is first found in Bartholomew Keckermann, *Systema SS. Theologiae*, appended to vol. II of the *Opera* (1614)" (Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics*, 1:51); "The concept of system was introduced in connection with the analytic method in theology, notably by B. Keckermann (*Systema logicae*, Hanover 1600; *Systema ss theologiae*, Hanover 1602)" (Pannenberg, *Theology*, 355); "Since 1600, at least 90 books in all disciplines have used the term *system* in their titles. The first to use this word as a motif and book title was Philosopher/Theologian Bartholomew Keckermann in Heidelberg and later in Danzig (ca. 1609). His first system was his great *Systema logicae*" (Ritschl, *System*, 26).

[9] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (LS) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), s.v. "σύστημα."

[10] Epicurus *Ep*. 1 p. 21 U.

[11] Aristotle *Poetics* 1456a 11.

confederacy, band of partisans, company, guild, and at least once to the Roman senate.[12]

In military studies it described a body of soldiers or a corps.[13] In ecclesiastical

terminology it was used to indicate a college of priests or magistrates.[14] And finally, in

music, σύστημα is used to explain the unity of intervals and the scale in terms of

harmony.[15]

In the introductory section, "Die Entwicklung des Sprachgebrauches bis zum

Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts," of Ritschl's *System,* he deals with the ancient Greek and

Latin usages of the word system. In his time the authoritative Greek lexicon was

Stephanu's *Linguae Graecae,* which rendered σύστημα by the Latin words

"*coagmentatio*" (union)*,* "*concretio*" (solid formation)*,* "*compages*" (something bound

together, joint, structure, framework), and "*coetus*" (meeting, encounter, assembly,

intercourse).[16] He goes on to highlight the different contexts and objects described by

σύστημα.[17]

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[12] Plutarch *Romanos* 13.

[13] Liddell and Scott, *LS*, s.v. "σύστημα."

[14] Ibid.

[15] Euclid *Sect*. *Can*. 19–20; Ptolemy *Harmonics* 2. 5–6.

[16] Ritschl, *System*, 5.

[17] "And if followed closely, this lexicon applies σύστημα to many different objects, in natural as well as synthetic dimensions. In medicine, it refers to *Concremente*. With the philosophers, it refers to the existing cosmos—the heavens and earth, the body with its limbs, and in at least one instance it refers to water. Even farther afield, the expression refers to: military formations (ταξις, φαλαγξ, *turma, globus, manus militum*), political structures (πολις, πολιτεια, δημοκρατια), *Collegien*, namely of preists, but it also can refer to the Roman Senate. In musical usage, the word commonly refers to the *constitutiones* emerging from the διαστηματα (intervals). Also, in the metrics, σύστημα refers to the summary of several components in a total. Finally, it appears in logical contexts, conveys psychological relationships and at least once συστημα characterizes the arts" (Ritschl, *System*, 5, 6).

In considering the Greek usages, however, Ritschl argues that out of all the above instances, σύστημα never fully anticipated anything like a theological or philosophical 'system' in the modern sense.[18] This is also corroborated by Funkenstein who emphasizes that, "indeed, the very word 'system' stood, until the seventeenth century, not for a set of interdependent propositions but for a set of *things*–for example, *systema mundi* or *systema corporis*."[19] Ritschl's view, however, can soften this claim with his recognition of an obscure reference in Lucian's Παρασιτέω (ca. A.D. 165-175) where the Greek term σύστημα is applied to the arts:

> Tychiades: What on earth is an art, then? Surely you know.
> Simon: To be sure.
> Tychiades: Then do not hesitate to tell, if you do know.
> Simon: An art, I remember to have heard a learned man say, is a ***complex*** (σύστημα) of knowledges exercised in combination to some end useful to the world.[20]

With this usage, Ritschl is suggesting the possibility of at least one instance of a methodological/conceptual system of 'knowledge' in the ancient usages. And this may give a past echo to Kant's usage, which is discussed below, but the lack of any follow-up references until the time of at least Keckermann suggests a weak case for any mature cognitive system theories before 1600.

In Lewis and Short's *Latin Dictionary*, there is only a short blurb describing *systema* as "a whole consisting of several parts, a complex whole."[21] In Latin-to-Latin

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[18] Ritschl, *System*, 6.

[19] Funkenstein, *Theology*, 6.

[20] Lucian, *Parasite* (LCL, 4:247, trans. A. M. Harmon).

[21] Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (*LD*) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), s.v. "systema."

dictionaries, however, there is a bit more provided. According to Ritschl, some other

lexical works in Latin associate *systema* with *compages* (something bound together, joint,

structure, framework)*, constructio* (erection, joining together, building, construction,

arrangement)*,* and *coactio* (collection, compression, abridgement), but again specific

background for *systema* as it is used in theology and philosophy in the modern period

appears to be absent.[22] Furthermore, in addition to the Classical and Medieval Latin

usages, Ritschl finds that the theological or philosophical usage *systema* is also missing

from the Humanist works on theology and philosophy.[23] Subsequently, Ritschl

concludes that, in the Classical Greek and in the Classical, Medieval, and Humanist

phases of Latin, there are no theological or philosophical applications of the term

σύστημα/*systema*.[24] That is, at least, not until the work of Keckermann (1600ff.), which

is supported by the statement from Funkenstein above.

Before dealing with Keckermann, however, a couple of comments should be

made concerning Ritschl's claim here. Though his investigations into the time of

Keckermann and afterwards are thorough, he seems here to be dismissing millennia of

thought in a matter of a few paragraphs. One cannot expect to find the whole

etymological story behind a word or phrase in a couple of lexicons. Even if the word is

not used in high-profile passages in historical theology and philosophy, its spontaneous

generation in the mouth of Keckermann seems extraordinary. And there is also

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[22] Ritschl, *System*, 7.

[23] Ibid. Here it is suggested that the Humanists would be even less inclined to find use for the concept of system in theology and philosophy than the Medievals due to their incredulity regarding the possibility of linguistic analogy between physics and metaphysics; e.g., Lorenzo Valla, *Dialecticarum disputationum libri tres*, ed. Johannus Noviomagus (Colon, 1541), 27.

undoubtedly a wealth of material that could be explored in terms of the *conceptual*

background to Keckermann's usage, which is all but ignored in Ritschl.

In this study, however, the pre-Keckermann etymological background is not the

primary focus. But here lies a charge for students in theology, history, and philosophy to

explore the possible conceptual background to this eventful innovation by Keckermann.

Meanwhile, for the purposes of this study, Keckermann's introduction of this term was

considered, beginning with its contextual background and milieu.

**Background and Milieu of Keckermann's
Theological Development**

Bartholomew Keckermann (1571-1609) began his career on the threshold

between the Renaissance and the Modern eras. The revolutionary fervor of the

Lutheran/Humanist critique of scholasticism and hierarchical Christianity was being

replaced by the momentum of the Protestant Orthodoxy movement. Luther's dialectical

and polemical expressions were already giving way to the unifying structures of the

confessions and catechisms of Augsburg, Heidelberg, etc.[25] Among Keckermann's peers

in the second generation of Reformed Protestantism, the issues had expanded beyond

merely correcting the doctrines of soteriology, anthropology, and ecclesiology to the new

emphases of proper scholastic and catechetical methodologies.[26] But, in fear of simply

uncritically reviving the empty carcass of Medieval Scholasticism, the Protestant scholars

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[24] Ritschl, *System*, 7–8.

[25] Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics,* vol. 1,
Prolegomena to Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 15ff.

[26]Ibid.

were anxious to establish a uniquely 'protestant' method.[27] This struggle involves a

colorful history of competing approaches to theological method in the midst of which

Keckermann pursued his own theological studies.[28]

Melanchthon and the Phillipists

Among the theologians who informed Keckermann's thoughts on method, Philip

Melanchthon was surely a giant. It was Melanchthon who insisted that the book of

Romans should be considered a model for "*methodus,*"[29] which he then applied to his

own *Loci Communes*. And it is in the *Loci* that the dialectical and polemical methods

that characterized the infancy of the reformation gave way to a serious attempt at a

comprehensive summary of Christian doctrine from the their unique perspective.

At this point, however, it should be noted that Melanchthon's method, though

comprehensive in intent, was still only a preliminary step towards the fuller expression of

systematic method that arose in the decades that followed.[30] Thus, as the *loci*

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid. See also: Howard Hotson, "Philosophical Pedagogy in Reformed Central Europe between Ramus and Comenius: A Survey of the Continental Background of the 'Three Foreigners,'" in *Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation: Studies in Intellectual Communication*, ed. Gark Greengrass et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 42ff.; Walter J. Ong, *Ramus: Method, and the Decay of Dialogue; From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).

[29] Ritschl, *System*, 14; Timothy Wengert, "Biblical Interpretation in the Works of Philip Melanchthon," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 2:323.

[30] Ironically, this is convincingly argued by Karl Barth a few centuries later when he insisted that when systematic theology is truly faithful to the Word of God, which it seeks to disclose, it cannot aspire to be a *system* but only a collection of *loci* (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics (CD)*, vol. I-2, *The Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, trans. G. W. Bromily and T. F. Torrence [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963], 870).

terminology dwindled, Melanchthon's students and colleagues, in order to emphasize the unity of doctrine, began to prefer the term *corpus*, which suggested the idea of a "body of doctrine"; for example, the *Corpus Philippicum* (Lipsiae 1560).[31] And in the following decades, the concept of *corpus* became a watchword for doctrinal expressions.[32]

In fact, this initial development in the terminology used to describe theology (from *loci* to *corpus*) is helpful in highlighting the transition from the dialectic and polemical approaches characteristic of the fledgling movement towards its more developed 'systematic' methods employed in the seventeenth century.[33] It was not enough for the unique perspective of this movement to be described as a *corrective* of certain doctrines of Christianity as in Melanchthon's *loci*. Rather, in addition to correcting doctrines, those who inherited Luther's and Melanchthon's legacy were more and more convicted that the changes in the content and conclusions of theology should impact its structure and method as well.[34] And this 'reformation' had to be more than merely a reconsideration of certain parts of the body of truth, but a complete regeneration of the whole from within.[35]

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[31] Ritschl, *System*, 15.

[32] Ibid., 15–21.

[33] Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 23ff.

[34] "This positive development of the theology of the Reformation into a dogmatic system—or the radical adaptation of the dogmatic system to conform to the exegetical, anthropological, and soteriological insights of the Reformers—is the natural and perhaps necessary result of the Reformers' need to train followers and successors in the faith" (Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 26).

[35] "The systematic models within which the Reformers worked and against which they reacted, are examined again, now by the early orthodox, for the sake of setting forth a critically altered theological system in which the insights of the reformers have been used as the basis for determining and developing not only individual doctrines but entire patterns of exposition and doctrinal interrelationship" (Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 27).

Therefore, as the formulations of what the Protestants believed became more integrally 'protestant', their titles also became more indicative of their new emphasis on unity and integration in structure and method. The titles evolved from Melanchthon's *Loci Communis*, to *corpus doctrinae*, and finally to labels such as *corpus doctrinae integrum*, *corpus veritas integrrum*, or simply *corpus integrum* (integrated body).[36] Thus, it is not difficult to see the influence of these views of dogmatics as an integrated or organic body on Keckermann's intellectual development.

Ramus and the pedagogical critique

Along with their emphasis on method and unity, the Philipists (as Melanchthon's students and followers were called by his critics) were known for being less critical of the use of Aristotle in theology than Luther was.[37] This led to a rift between the Philipists and those who sought to distance Protestant theology from Aristotle.[38] Keckermann, however, did not seem to be terribly moved by arguments against the merit of Aristotle's philosophy.[39]

And, as one of Melanchthon's students put it: "Thus it all comes together as an imprint on the mind, as a summary, an integrated body of the true doctrine of God, joined by its particular members or loci, proportionately ordered and clearly explained. . . . As Polybius in his historical lecture insists, it is σοματοποιέιν taking into account all the other sciences, as a summary of truth in brief and a method to consolidate the teachings. In this way, theological method is σοματοποιέιν or as Paul puts it, ὑποτύπωσις" (David Chytraeus, *De ratione studii theologici recte instituendi* [Wittenberg: 1561], 8).

[36] Ritschl, *System*, 18–21.

[37] Laurence Dickey, *Hegel: Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit, 1770–1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 23.

[38] Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 15ff.

[39] Howard Hotson, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and Its German Ramifications, 1543–1630* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 137ff.

He did, however, subscribe to criticism of another sort, that of Petrus Ramus (1515-1572) who objected to the use of Aristotle in the schools on pedagogical grounds.[40] To Ramus, the problem with Aristotle was not so much Aristotelianism as a philosophy, but that "all the things that Aristotle has said are inconsistent because they are poorly systematized and can be called to mind only by the use of arbitrary mnemonic devices."[41] For this reason, Ramus objected to the pedagogical value of Aristotle to the point of removing Aristotelianism completely from theological education and in its place introduced his own method, which was supposed to rely more heavily on Scripture.[42]

Actually, the Ramist reform was extremely successful, entangling itself into both the schools and governing bodies of not only the German states but also in England and its territories.[43] As such, Ramism was able to influence many schools to completely discontinue their courses on Aristotle, which were replaced by courses based on Ramist textbooks.[44] Of course this meant that those who were unwilling to give up on Aristotle, professors and students alike, were forced to either suppress their views or find other schools that had not succumbed to this critique.

Thus, Keckermann's intellectual and theological development is best understood within the context of the development of an increased attention to methodology, especially as methodology was to be uniquely *Protestant* and was to integrate Christian

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[40] Ong, *Ramus*, 46ff.

[41] Ibid., 46–47.

[42] Hotson, "Philosophical Pedagogy," 35; see also Jürgen Moltmann, "Zur Bedeutung des Petrus Ramus für Philosophie und Theologie des Calvinismus," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 68 (1957): 295–318.

[43] Hotson, "Philosophical Pedagogy," 30ff.

[44] Ibid.

doctrine *as a body*. Also, as it is shown below, Keckermann was, at different times, affiliated with both Phillipist (at Wittenberg) and Ramist (at Danzig) communities.[45] As such, he was exposed to both sides of the conflict over the role of Aristotle in theological education. And it is within this climate that Keckermann came up with his own synthesis among these forces, which would dominate the terminology and set the stage for theological method for the next few centuries.

Keckermann's Life and Career

Bartholomew Keckermann was born sometime between the years 1571 and 1573 to Georgius (or Gregor) Keckermann in Gdansk (Poland).[46] After his early education at the Gdansk Academic Gymnasium, he began his university training at Wittenberg in May of 1590 and later at Leipzig in the spring of 1592.[47] He finished his Master of Arts degree from the University of Heidelberg in February of 1595.[48] Not much is known of his childhood accept that he was brought up in the merchant class with typical liberal arts training (*trivium et quadrivium*).[49] And, though the upper classes of Gdansk were Lutheran and strongly anti-reformed, the merchant classes tended towards the Reformed views of Calvin and Zwingly.[50]

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[45] Hotson, *Commonplace Learning*, 137.

[46] W. H. van Zuylen, *Bartholomäus Keckermann Sein Leben und Wirken* (Borna-Leipzig: Noske, 1934), 1; Freedman, "Career and Writings," 306, appendix 1, 326–328.

[47] van Zuylen, *Bartholomäus Keckermann*, 3.

[48] Freedman, "Career and Writings," 307.

[49] van Zuylen, *Bartholomäus Keckermann*, 1.

[50] Ibid.

After matriculation at Heidelberg, Keckermann served for almost a year as supervisor or dean at the dormitory there.[51] Then at the end of 1596 he accepted a position as a teacher at the Paedogogium, a university preparatory school also in Heidelberg.[52] Later the next year he became a teacher at the Collegium Sapientium, and finally in February of 1600 he was appointed professor of Hebrew at the University.[53] Then in 1602 Keckermann returned to Gdansk to accept the position of Professor of philosophy at the Gdansk Academic Gymnasium.[54] That same year before he left Heidelberg, he received his licentiate of theology degree from the University.[55] This appointment Keckermann held until his untimely death on 25 July 1609.[56]

Influences

Keckermann was fortunate to have lived in times of great transition. As a child at Gdansk, he was instructed in the works of Calvin and Zwingly. While at Wittenberg, however, in addition to the Lutheran version of Protestantism, the Reformed views were being taught by the crypto-Calvinists.[57] Of course, completely within the Wittenberg tradition, the humanistic emphasis on the original sources and languages was a guiding principle in Keckermann's academic values as is evident in his first professorship in Hebrew. Also, as the anti-scholastic crusades of the Humanists were waning, the classics

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[51] Freedman, "Career and Writings," 307.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., 308.

[55] Ibid.

[56] van Zuylen, *Bartholomäus Keckermann*, 8–10.

[57] Ibid., 2.

of philosophy, and especially the works of Aristotle, were returning to their places as the foundation of theological and philosophical methodology.[58]

In addition to the broad movements of the time in northern Europe and in the schools, there are undoubtedly at least a few individuals who had particular impact on Keckermann's ideological development. As noted above, Melanchthon challenged students of Christian theology and philosophy to strive for nothing less than perfection in method. And as a student at Wittenberg, Melanchthon's posthumous impact on Keckermann should go without saying. It is quite explicit, however, in his first *system* (*Systema logicae*), with frequent references to Melanchthon especially concerning method.[59]

In addition to Melanchthon, there are at least two other significant influences that should be mentioned. The first is Ramus and his anti-Aristotelian reform, which had impacted the intellectual climate of Keckermann's generation.[60] Keckermann had great respect for Ramus's program and especially his critique of the difficult format of Aristotle's writings.[61] But he resisted the excesses of Ramism, arguing that Aristotle is "fundamental" and "preparatory to all remaining higher learning."[62] And this stand led to his own solution to the antagonism between the ever more popular Ramism and

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[58] Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 13ff.

[59] Bartholomew Keckermann, *Systema logicae, tribus libris adornatum pleniore praeceptorum methodo, and commentariis scriptis ad praeceptorum illustrationem and collationem cum doctrina Aristotelis, atque aliorum, tum veterum, tum recentium logicorum sententiis ac disputationibus* (Hanover: Apud Guilielmum Antonium, 1620), as reprinted in, Bartholomew Keckermann, Operum Omnium quae extant (Geneva: Apud Petrum Aubertum, 1614), 167ff. Hereafter referred to as *Systema logicae*.

[60] See above, pp. 19ff.

[61] Hotson, "Philosophical Pedagogy," 42.

Scholastic Aristotelianism, where he attempted "to combine the best features of these two competing logics."[63] Thus, "the doctrine he expounded was essentially that of Aristotle, but the orderliness, clarity and systematic coherence with which he expounded it were strongly reminiscent of Ramus. The result was a presentation of Peripatetic substance in quasi-Ramist form which Keckermann dubbed 'methodological Peripateticism,'" and which inspired his innovative label, 'system'.[64]

The final influence to be discussed is Zacharius Ursinius (1534-1583), who studied with Melanchthon at Wittenberg from 1550 to 1557 until he was exiled to Zurich (1560) for his crypto-Calvinism.[65] His contributions in theological method are evidenced by his contributions to the *Heidelberg Catechism*, and the *Doctrinae christianae compendium* (1584), which were quite possibly either textbooks or reference materials in Wittenberg, Leipzig, and Heidelberg when Keckermann was a student. In fact there is a most interesting statement made by Ursinius, where he argues that the first and most important reformed reply to the *Concordienformel* is what he calls "the *systema doctrinae christianae*."[66]

Of course, it could be argued that, as this statement predates Keckermann's *Systema logicae*, it is Ursinius who should be the real culprit for introducing the term to theology. In addition to this simple statement, however, Ursinius provides no

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 42–43.

[65] Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 45ff.

[66] *Neostadiensium admonitio Christiana de libro concoriae, quem vocant, a quibusdam theologies nominee quorundam ordinum Augustanae Confessionis edito.* Neost. in Palat. 1581, 191.

explanation to what a *systema doctrinae* is, other than the proper response to the *Concordienformel*, and neither does he use the term in the same way again. Therefore, it would be difficult to determine whether Ursinius intended the meaning of system that came later. It is possible, however, that though there is no known reference to this statement by Ursinius in Keckermann's writings, it played a role in Keckermann choosing the term "system" to represent his synthesis of the best of Aristotelian, Philipist, and Ramist methods. In spite of this, however, Keckermann is still considered the source of this terminology in theology and philosophy, and it is to his writings that we now turn.

System in Keckermann's Writings

With a relatively narrow window of productivity (1590-1609) there are at least forty works attributed to Keckermann's pen. The scope of his contributions is encyclopedic in breadth but also rigorous in depth, at least in his pet topics. In addition to many tracts and discourses on a variety of subjects, Keckermann's primary focus was didactic, producing a number of textbooks on logic, rhetoric, Hebrew grammar, philosophy, mathematics, physics, metaphysics, and theology.[67] With his passion for inclusiveness, in addition to the main topics of these texts, he also dealt thoroughly with issues of family life, politics, geometry, geography, optics, and others.[68]

The first time Keckermann uses the word system is in the title of his first textbook, *Systema logicae* (1600). After that, Keckermann continues with the term in his

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[67] See Bibliography; Freedman, "Career and Writings," 311.

[68] Ibid.; "Keckermann did investigate and lecture on nearly all the topics in the range of academic discipline" (Richard A. Muller, "*Vera Philosophia cum sacra Theologia nusquam pugnat:* Keckermann on Philosophy, Theology, and the Problem of Double Truth," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 15 [Fall 1984]: 341).

succeeding textbooks: *Systema SS. Theologiae* (1602), *Systema ethicae* (1607), *Systema disciplinae politicae* (1607), *Systema rhetoricae* (1608), *Scientiae metaphysicae compenium systema* (1609), *Systema physicum* (1610), *Systema astronomiae comendiosum* (1611), and *Systema geographicum* (1611).   Then, posthumously, Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638) applied this term to all of Keckermann's works as a combined whole, resulting in the *Systema systematum* (system of systems) published in 1613, which he intended to be a 'system' of all of Keckermann's systems.[69]

This section focuses on three of Keckermann's works in particular: the *Systema logicae* as his first system and the work in which he introduces the term; his *Praecognitorum Logicorum*, published shortly after the *Systema logicae* where he provides another further explanation of this term; and finally the *Systema SS. Theologiae*, where he applies this term to theology.

Systema logicae

In the preface to his first edition of this work, Keckermann explains his motivation for presenting his system of logic. It is not so much as to dispute another's version of the same subject but rather, from his didactic concerns, to present it more clearly.[70] More specifically, he is attempting to show that, if he can improve his readers' basic command of the skills (*artis*) of logic, they can increase their knowledge of any discipline they apply those skills to.[71] And then later in his introduction, he connects this

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[69] Bartholomew Keckerman and Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Systema systematum* (Hanover: Antonius, 1613).

[70] Keckermann, "Ad Cultores Logicae," in the preface to *Systema logicae*, n.p.

[71] Ibid.; see also van Zuylen, *Bartholomäus Keckermann*, 19; D. Hamilton, "From Dialectic to Didactic," *Paradigm* 2 (2002): 15–24.

didactic conviction with Melanchthon's obscure Lucian reference to explain his preference for the word "system":

> I therefore refer to logic in two senses: first as a *habitu* of the mind developed by instruction and training; secondly as the precepts of logic arranged as a system, which I here provide. In this way the skill (*habitu*) of logic is acquired from instruction, as in the Lucianist definition (*definitio Luciani*) which Doctor Melanchthon strongly recommends: "whatever ones skill (*ars*) is, it is a system of knowledges working together to some end that is beneficial to the world." [72]

According to this introduction, this expanded view of logic is basically a comprehensive and versatile methodology, which Keckermann envisions as applicable to almost any subject or discipline.

As he unfolds this objective, the rest of the *Systema logicae* is divided into three 'books' (*Libris*); the first dealing with the basic guidelines (*directrix simplicium*) of logic; the second with the more complex concepts (*directrix conceptus complexi*); and the third book divided into two *tractatus*, the first focusing exclusively on the syllogism and the latter method. [73] In this last section of the last book of the *Systema logicae*, Keckermann divides method into two levels: *methodo universali* and *methodo particulari*. [74]

The latter or second level of method, the *methodo particulari*, out of his resurgent didactic concerns, Keckermann describes as the specific logical methodology appropriate to treat subjects or *loci* in their respective disciplines as Melanchthon did with dogmatic theology, [75] but it is in the former or first level of method, the *methodo universali*, that his concept of system comes finally to bear. Here he expands the Lucianist definition of

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[72] Keckermann, *Systema logicae*, 1.

[73] This is possibly one of the first in-depth treatments of the concept of *methodus* before Descartes.

[74] Keckermann, *Systema logicae*, 581ff.

[75] Ibid., 592ff.; van Zuylen, *Bartholomäus Keckermann*, 39.

system into a universally applicable method which facilitates "the arrangement, through

contemplation and practice, of the precepts of any discipline into an integrated system."[76]

In further explanation, Keckermann divides the *methodo universalis* into two

further categories—the synthetic and analytic.[77] The synthetic approach, according to

Keckermann, begins with the most general or universal a priori definitions, then moves

from there in graduations of lesser generality or acceptance to the more particular

questions. In this way the general principles act as a foundation of certainty upon which

the particulars of experience and observation can be built to complete the science in

question as an integrated whole or system of knowledge.[78]

The other approach, the analytic, to Keckermann, should not be seen as a

contradiction or even as a dichotomy, but rather as the complement to the synthetic.[79]

According to Keckermann's view, the analytic method begins with what we know of our

end or ultimate purpose and then proceeds backwards to the questions that are more

immediate.[80] And, in so doing, it charts the course through the principles in between the

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[76] "Universalis est, qua Systema integrae alicuius disciplinae contemplatricis, aut operatricis suis praeceptis disponitur" (Keckermann, *Systema logicae*, 586).

[77] "Est vel synthetica,vel analytica siue composita and resolutiva" (Keckermann, *Systema logicae*, 587).

[78] This synthetic/analytic distinction should not be confused with the inductive/deductive distinction, which, though related and similar, does not always correspond in every usage (see *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1890], s.v. "Analysis"). Keckermann's usage with subsequent commentary on the same, may seem to contradict some other usages of these terms (e.g.: Karl Raimund Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* [New York: Rutledge, 2002], 5ff.).

[79] Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics*, 1:58ff.; see also Paul Althaus, *Die Prinzipien der deutschen reformierten Dogmatik im Zeitalter der aristotelischen Scholastik* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1914), 40ff.

[80] Keckermann, *Systema logicae*, 590ff.

immediate and ultimate.[81] This can be illustrated in the process by which one might

solve a maze by beginning with the destination and working back towards the start.[82]

Keckermann himself characterizes this approach by the builder who, before

beginning a construction, must first have a clear concept of the finished product in mind

(*praecognita*).[83] And, having this 'pre-knowledge' of the end, the builder has only to

supply what is missing between the present state and the completion of his task. Applied

to the sciences, Keckermann suggests that each has a perceivable end and can be

mastered by supplying the "middle" between this end and what we already know of the

subject.[84] Again, we see the influence of the Lucian reference above.

Thus, together, the analytic and the synthetic approaches to method make up what

Keckermann called the "universal method." And, though he is often given credit for the

popularization of the analytic method, Keckermann's call for both aspects of method is

part of a broad motif in the early part of the Protestant orthodoxy period.[85]

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[81] Based on Keckermann's explanation, 'immediate' and 'ultimate' can be understood in both the temporal as well as in the ontological sense.

[82] For an interesting discussion on the relationship between the concept of system with the metaphor of a labyrinth, which was popular during the enlightenment, see Julie Candler Hayes, *Reading the French Enlightenment: System and Subversion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[83] Keckermann, *Systema logicae*, 590.

[84] Ibid.

[85] "Typical of the era is a concern to distinguish between a theoretical, somewhat deductive and teleological approach to system, usually called 'synthetic,' and a more practical, somewhat inductive approach usually called 'analytic.' The synthetic model, which became the dominant pattern for system, begins with prolegomena and the doctrine of Scripture and moves from the doctrine of God, via the historical path of sin and redemption, to the last things. Analytic patterns can, for example begin with the problem of sin and move, via the work of redemption, to faith and the articles of the faith" (Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 31).

Again, as noted above, Keckermann did not pit these two against each other as competing methods. Rather, he included both approaches in a type of cooperative effort to maximize the potential for a comprehensive method. In his theological system, Keckermann actually includes a prolegomena of the synthetic sort, which finds its ground in the universal idea of being.[86] But this is only the first part of his system and simply sets the stage for the problem of sin and the need for redemption, which requires the analytical approach and is grounded in the principle of *ends* (*finis*).[87] Thus, it would be inaccurate to portray Keckermann as a proponent of either of these emphases on method as superior or to replace the other.

At this point, it is helpful to remember that, for the most part, before the *Systema logicae*, usage of the term "system" referred exclusively to systems of 'things' such as the planets.[88] Even in the musical usage, it can be argued that the cords or notes are objects of sense experience. As such, systems were objective wholes being observed, known, and described by human knowledge. Keckermann, however, was arguing along with Lucian that, in order to better comprehend the *things* in the objective realm, our knowledge of these things should be a system.[89]

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[86] Keckermann, *Systema SS. Theologiae: Tribus Libris adornatum* (Hanover: Apud Guilielmum Antonium, 1602).

[87] Keckermann, *Systema logicae*, 590. See also, Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 264: "The methodological implications of genus seem to have been given their earliest statement by Keckermann, who identified the genus of theology as *prudential* and classified it as a purely practical discipline. This definition led him to the conclusion that the method of theology must be entirely analytical: it cannot proceed speculatively from first cause to final goal but rather analytically—from the final goal assumed by the *praxis*, to underlying conditions that determine the patterns and shape of that *praxis*, to the intermediate or proximate activities and end of the *praxis*."

[88] Rescher, *Cognitive Systematization*, 5–6.

[89] Keckermann, *Systema logicae*, 1.

In his monogram, *Cognitive Systematization*, Nicholas Rescher points out that,

"while the concept of cognitive systematization is very old, the term 'system' itself was

not used in this [cognitive] sense until much later." [90] Here he is referring to Keckermann

and his contemporaries as the first to use it to refer to "an organically structured body of

knowledge."[91] Of course, Keckermann himself did not provide this explanation, but his

usage of the term *systema* clearly stepped across the threshold from its classical material

or physical designation to a new emphasis on thought and knowledge. And as history

records, the application of this term led to the almost universal recognition of cognitive

systems as the counterpart to the long-accepted application in terms of material systems.

Praecognitorum Logicorum

Not long after the publication of his system of logic, it became evident that there

was need of a 'preface' or introduction to better prepare his readers.[92] Thus, in this work,

Keckermann explains further how logic can be called a "system" through the following

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[90] Rescher, *Cognitive Systematization*, 5–6.

[91] "In ancient Greek, *systema* (from *syn-histemi*, 'to [make to] stand together')
originally meant something joined together—a connected or composite whole. The term
figures in Greek antiquity to describe a wide variety of composite objects. . . . The
Renaissance gave the term a renewed currency. At first it functioned here too in its
ancient applications in its broad sense of a generic composite. But in due course it came
to be adopted by Protestant theologians of the 16th century to stand specifically for the
comprehensive exposition of the articles of faith, along the lines of a medieval *summa*: a
doctrinal *compendium*. . . . This post-Renaissance redeployment of the term *system* had
far-reaching significance. In the original (classical) sense, a system was a physical thing:
a compositely structured complex. In the more recent sense, a system was an organically
structured body *of knowledge*. . . . The dual application of systems-terminology to
physical and intellectual complexes thus reflects a longstanding and fundamental feature
of the conception at issue" (Rescher, *Cognitive Systematization*, 5–6).

[92] Interestingly, Keckermann may have been the first author, or one of the first
authors, to use the concept of prolegomena (*Praecognita*) to refer to an introductory or
preliminary textbook.

dialogue as an answer to the question "What is intended by a 'complete system of formal logic'?"

> 1. *Since therefore Aristotle's* Organum *does not construct a model of the idea (as something spoken) and the measure of a completed system, we are left to ask, from where did it originate?*
>
> You are correct in your insistence that it is impossible to obtain absolute knowledge of all the precepts of logic. What then is a correct and complete system of precepts? This cannot be determined. I will proceed therefore to describe some extended whole according to my intuition and nature. Thus consider: every system is a whole of conjoined parts (precepts clearly integrated). According to Aristotle, in each whole there are three distinct attributes, *τάξιν, συμμετρία, το ὡρισμένον* (order, symmetry, determination/distribution of its parts).[93] To these, I will add that in every proper extended system, exists both formal and material aspects. This is not unlike a house, which, when completed, is also a *σύστημα*. Consider the construction of the parts of a house, joists, walls, foundation, and the wood or material from which each is constructed.
>
> 2. *What therefore is a system of formal logic?*
>
> A system of formal logic is the product of two acts: first, the distribution of the parts, then, in waves the coordination of the parts to all of its ends.[94]

Here Keckermann explains the concept of a cognitive system by simply applying the classical (Aristotelian) definition of an objective system ("some extended whole")— "every system is a whole of conjoined parts"—to Logic.

It is interesting to note in this work that he forgoes the Lucian reference to utilize the classical definition here. This is possibly due to his objective in this work to reach a broader audience including those who are more dependent on the Aristotelian curriculum

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[93] The only possible reference Keckermann can be referring to here is from the *Metaphysics* (13.1078a) in which Aristotle is arguing for the connection of the attributes of beauty and goodness with mathematics: "The main species of beauty are orderly arrangement, proportion, and definiteness" (*τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἴδη τάξις καὶ σθμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὡρισμένον*).

[94] Keckermann, *Praecognitorum Logicorum tractatus III* (Hanover: Apud Guilielmum Antonium, 1606), 139.

and had already been exposed to the idea of the *corpus integrum*. With the second question, however, he expands the system idea to include the dual aspects (formal and material) of the classical idea of system and, in so doing, deals with the same idea inherent in the Lucian definition.

In this duality, the formal aspect of system is a process, through which Logic becomes a system, that is, an integrated whole in the material—though cognitive—sense. And, as such, he is able to bridge the daunting gulf that hitherto had made this discipline, if not all others, so difficult to master. And, until further research discovers an earlier statement, this is the first explanation of a cognitive system as a distinction from what Keckermann here calls a "proper extended system." But before his critics even had a chance to question the potential of this "universal method," he sets about applying it to as many other disciplines as time would allow, theology being his first application.

Systema SS. Theologiae[95]

Published in 1602, *Systema SS. Theologiae* was Keckermann's next work that he entitled "system." And here he is true to the method set forth in his *Systema logicae*. He begins the *Systema SS. Theologiae* with a discussion of the nature of theology, whether it is a theoretical (*contemplatrix*) or practical (*operatrix*) discipline.[96] And again, avoiding choosing sides, Keckermann suggests that, though theology may not be considered *artes*, it is surely *prudential*, that is, the practical/moral application of a theoretical discipline, and as such, it involves both the theoretical and practical aspects of the soul.[97] Thus, if

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[95] "System of Sacred Theology."

[96] Keckermann, *Systema SS. Theologiae*, 1.

[97] Ibid., 1ff.

the human soul could participate in the divine nature of God (*qui in Dei participatione and similitudine*), one should be able to both 'contemplate' as well as 'practice' the knowledge of God.[98] Of course this is all dependent on the teleological principle of his method: *finis theologiae est ipsa salus*, the salvation of the soul.[99]

Therefore, with salvation as the end (*finis*) of the discipline of theology, and the human condition as the starting point, Keckermann proceeds to explore the 'middle' or principles of theology. The application of his method to theology is probably best illustrated by his own diagram for the work. See figure 1.

Notice at the top of fig. 1 that Keckermann distinguishes between what he calls "principles" and "parts" of his overall system. The principles comprise Book 1, while Books 2 and 3 are the two main "parts" of theology, the Fall and its remedy. Book 1— the principles—represents what Keckermann called the synthetic phase of his method, while Books 2 and 3 represent the analytic phase of his method, that is, the process of remedying the Fall. Notice again, how this diagram illustrates both the *corpora integrum* and *Lucianist* meanings of "system" here.

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[98] Ibid., 1.

[99] Ibid., 5. Here it should be noted that in Keckermann's arguments concerning *prudentia* and the teleological principle of his system, as it will be shown later, he is very close to Aquinas's discussions of the same minus the term "system." Of course, possibly due to the unpopularity of Aquinas among Protestant theologians, he did not explore this continuity explicitly. But as this study looks at the case studies in the following chapters, this continuity, whether admitted or not, is an example of a more pervasive continuity throughout the history of Christian theology and Western philosophy.

OVERALL OUTLINE OF THE SYSTEM

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                                          ┌──────────────────────┐
                                          │  Principles (Book 1)  │
┌─────────────────────┐                   └──────────────────────┘
│  The SYSTEM of      │
│  Theology Distributed│
│  into Parts         │                   ┌──────────────────────┐
└─────────────────────┘                   │  Parts (Books 2 &3)   │
                                          └──────────────────────┘
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OUTLINE OF BOOK 1

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                                            ┌──────────┐   ┌────────┐
                                            │ Absolute │   │ Father │
                              ┌─────────┐   └──────────┘   └────────┘
                              │ Essence │   ┌──────────┐   ┌────────┐
              ┌──────────┐    └─────────┘   │ Existent │   │  Son   │
              │ Nature of│                  └──────────┘   └────────┘
              │   God    │   ┌────────────┐ ┌──────────┐   ┌────────┐
              └──────────┘   │ Properties │ │ Absolute │   │ Spirit │
┌───────────┐               └────────────┘ └──────────┘   └────────┘
│ Principles│                              ┌──────────┐
└───────────┘                              │ Relative │
                                           └──────────┘

                                           ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐
                                           │ Special  │   │  Primary:    │   │ Content  │
                             ┌────────────┐└──────────┘   │  Writen      │   └──────────┘
                             │ Revelation │               └──────────────┘   ┌──────────┐
                             └────────────┘┌──────────┐                      │  Form    │
                                           │ General  │                      └──────────┘
                                           └──────────┘   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐
                                                          │ Secondary:   │   │ Universal│
                                                          │ Reflection   │   └──────────┘
                                                          └──────────────┘   ┌──────────┐
                                                                             │ Particular│
                                                                             └──────────┘
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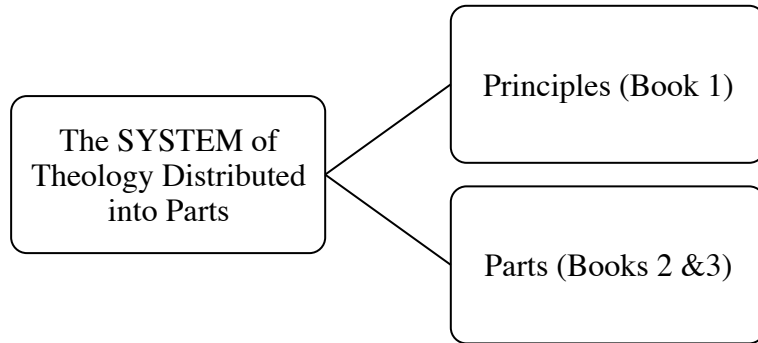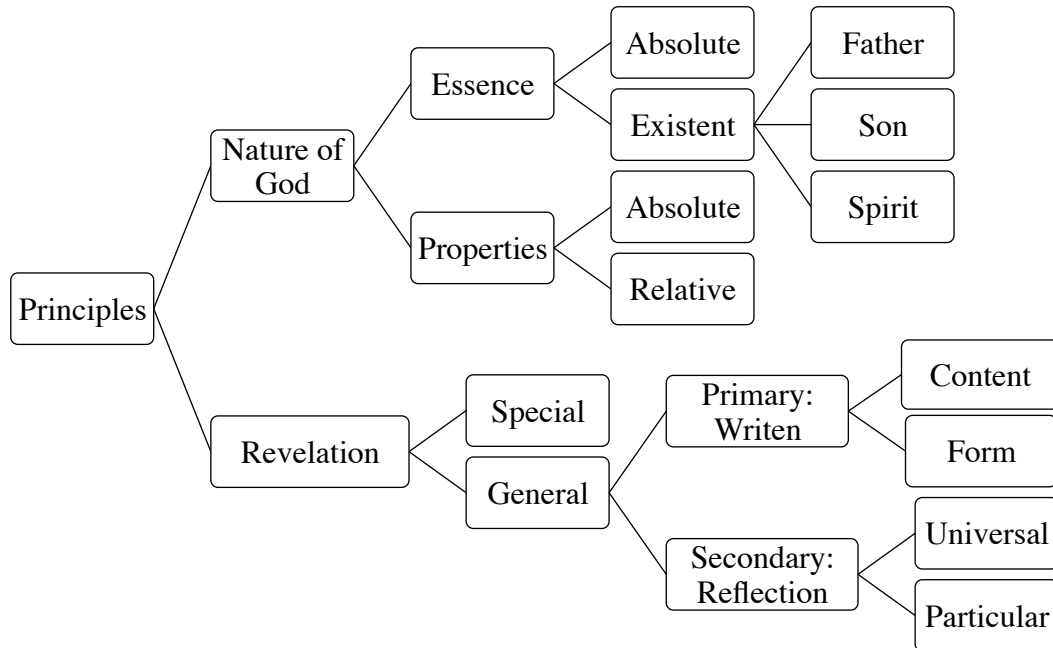
Figure 1. Overall outline and outline of Book 1. Adapted from Bartholomew Keckermann, *Systema SS. Theologiae*, Hanover: Apud Guilielmum Antonium, 1602, inside leaf (translation mine).
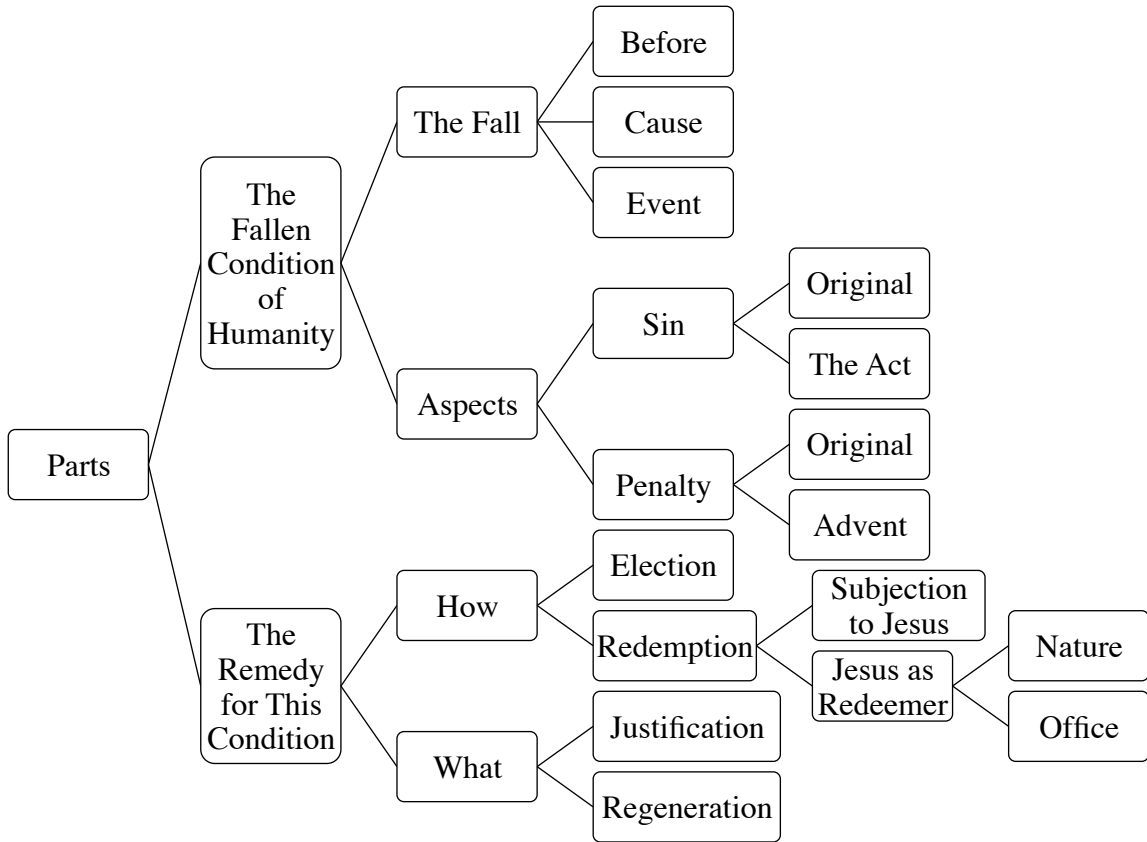
Figure 2. Outline of Book 2.

From his diagram and overall plan, and even in much of his particular doctrinal discussions, Keckermann is not introducing anything significantly innovative. His use of the word "system" to describe all of it, however, permanently changed the landscape of science, philosophy, and theology. In fact, it could be said that Keckermann is an integral player in a revolution, not only in theological method, but method as such.[100] Ramism was threatening to bury Aristotle for good. Aristotelianism with Classical and Medieval theological instruction had become a confusing web of dialectic questions,

answers, and rabbit holes. Discoveries in astronomy and science were demystifying the landscapes of reason and bleeding into the disciplines of philosophy and theology.[101] And still half a century before Descartes, Keckermann is able to unite it all: Ramus and Aristotle; Lucian and the *corpus integrum*; *synthetica* and *analytica*; and almost all known disciplines under a single form—the system.[102]

More specifically to this study, however, Keckermann launched a unique trend in the meaning and usage of the word "system" in theology and philosophy. He does this, not by changing the definition of the word as it had been used previously, but by applying this term more freely to the process and products of logic—method and knowledge, respectively. Thus, Keckermann subjected the world of cognition to the same rules that defined the cosmos, music, and any other wholes. To Keckermann, the idea of system, as he introduced it to logic, philosophy, and theology, describes at the same time, the form or structure of any body of knowledge and the process or method through which knowledge is best comprehended.

Summary of Keckermann's Contribution

Other than the obvious that he is the first to use the term in this context, Keckermann's primary contribution is that he sets the stage for the discussion of system by especially highlighting its dual aspects of the Lucianist usage (system as a process to achieve a purpose or end) and the *corpus integrum* usage (system as an integrated body or structure of doctrine). These two distinct facets of "system," though seldom explicitly,

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[100] Funkenstein, *Theology*, 6.

[101] Ibid., 6ff.

continued to play fundamental roles in the subsequent usages of the term, while Lucian

and the *corpus integrum* terminology fade. Therefore, in the following discussions, this

dual-aspect of system will be described as system as process (the Lucianist) and system

as structure (the *corpus integrum*).

Another important contribution is the fact that Keckermann boldly implicates

Aristotle in his rationale for introducing the term. Furthermore, in the same spirit as

Aquinas's *Summa*, he does this in order to make Aristotle more accessible to his

students.[103] And, like Aquinas, he was not suggesting that Aristotle was the foundation

for theology, but that we would be foolish not to take advantage of the massive

contribution of "*the* Philosopher."[104]

The significance of this to our understanding of system is that Keckermann was

not trying to replace any previous method, foundation, or principles for theology. Rather,

he was attempting to improve, simplify, or clarify what had come before. And he does so

by taking an already well-understood classical concept, σύστημα, and simply expanding

its definition.[105] And in so doing, Keckermann left his stamp on the shape of mainstream

theological expression, at least for three centuries. Thus, having highlighted

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[102] Ibid., 6; Freedman, "The Career and Writings of Bartholomew Keckermann (d. 1609)," 312.

[103] See below, chapter 3.

[104] Hotson, *Commonplace Learning*, 140ff.

[105] To date there does not appear to be any specific investigations into the Aristotelian backdrop to the idea of system, but due to Keckermann's implication of Aristotle in his explanation and the similarities between subsequent discussions of system and Aristotle's explanations of wholes and substances, this connection should be explored more.

Keckermann's primary contributions to the meaning and usage of this term, this investigation can move on to subsequent contributions.

Developments in the Meaning of "System" in Theology and Philosophy Since Keckermann

At the time of the publication (1906) of his *System,* Ritschl reports that there had been at least 90 works, on any subject, with the term "system" in their titles.[106] According to bibliographical resources available today, however, by 1906 there were at least 328 works with the word "system" in their titles.[107] Moreover, from 1600 through 2003 there had been at least 565 works in the fields of theology, philosophy, or science, with "system" in the title.[108] Consequently, due to obvious constraints, it is not the objective in this section to analyze every work claiming to be a system. Rather, the objective pursued here is to highlight some of the significant contributions to the technical theological meaning of this term since Keckermann introduced it to theological/philosophical methodology in the turn of the seventeenth century. These contributions come mainly in the form of statements of connotative definition as outlined in the introduction to this chapter.

Keckermann's Contemporaries

Even before Keckermann's death, the attraction of this new terminology was irresistible. Clemens Timpler (1563/4-1624) and Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638) sought further precision in the systematic program begun by their colleague. Timpler laid

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[106] Ritschl, *System*, 26.

[107] See System Titles appendix.

[108] Ibid.

the foundation for the application of systematic method to science. In his system of metaphysics under the title, *Technologia seu tractatus gerealis de natura et differentiis atrium liberalium* (1606), Timpler addressed the perennial debate over the distinction between *ars* and *scientia* where, traditionally, *ars* described disciplines that involved making or fixing *things*, while *scientia* described the disciplines that involved acquiring *knowledge*.[109]

Timpler attempted to further clarify the quagmire by suggesting that the comparison between *ars* and *scientia* is not as important as the one between what he called the *ars externa*—manual or physical skills for application, and *ars interna*—intellectual or moral skills for contemplation or moral development.[110] Then with this new distinction applied to Lucian's definition of system, *ars* is not merely a combination of knowledge or skills for yielding a tangible *end*, but it is also the effect which those skills and knowledge have on the subject's intellectual and moral development—an intangible end.[111] Thus, science is not only found in the form (structure) of a system, but can be found through the process of system and its end in the moral transformation of its participants.

Alsted, another of Keckermann's peers, was equally enthusiastic about this new terminology. Some of the systems accredited to him are: *Systema Mnemonicum* (1610)*, Systema Logici* (1614)*, Systema Physicum* (1614), and of course his editorial work on the post-humus publication of Keckermann's *Systema Systemata* (1613). And though he

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[109] Ritschl, *System*, 31. Unfortunately, the original source that Ritschl is referring to here is no longer available and I am dependent on Ritschl's comments alone.

[110] Ritschl, *System*, 32.

[111] Ibid., 34, 35.

deviated little from Keckermann and Timpler, Alsted added an important distinction between systems in the objective and subjective senses.[112]

Alsted explains that a *subjective system* draws on the classic definition of *compages* (construction), where there is an active agent responsible for gathering, joining, ordering, etc., the parts of a given subject into an integrated whole.[113] In this sense, "σύστημα is like a structure (*compages*), not haphazard, but methodical: not just a pile, but also an arrangement (*non quaelibet, sed methodica: non solum congesta, sed etiam digesta*)."[114] What makes it subjective isn't necessarily that it takes place in the inward experience of an individual so much as it is understood from the perspective of its designer, *the subject*, such as a builder's mental pre-concept of a house in the process of construction.

On the other hand, in the objective sense "σύστημα signifies a gathering: or as Aristotle spoke of the universe: 'the universe is a system of heavens and earth and those who are in it come to be according to its nature."[115] This type of system would also correspond to the descriptions of the human body and other organisms. Thus the objective type of system is one that is *given*, that exists *a priori* and whose parts, whole, arrangement, etc., are merely to be perceived by a passive observer. But again this does

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[112] Ibid., 37.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] "*Nam* συστημα *significat collectionem: ut apud Aristotelem de mundo:* κοσμος εστι συστημα εξ ουρανου και γης και των εν τουτοις περιεχομενων φυσ εων" (Alsted, *Systematum Mnenomicum*, quoted in Ritschl, *System*, 37).

not mean that there was no architect, but that it is understood as an *object* existing outside of its observer's subjectivity.[116]

Here we see that Keckermann's peers, with more clarification than augmentation, helped to launch this terminology into the mainstream. Beyond simply publishing more "systems" to propagate the idea, they expanded Keckermann's dual aspects of *system as process* (Timpler's tangible vs. intangible ends) and *system as structure* (Alsted's objective vs. subjective perspectives of system). Shortly after this, the usage of this term as a methodological device became extremely popular in Protestant theology, to which we now turn our focus.

Keckermann's Theological Legacy

The next stage in the etymological development of this term covers the period starting with the generation immediately after Keckermann's contemporaries in the first part of the seventeenth century, to the latter part of the eighteenth century. This period is characterized mainly by theology growing more into its identity as a 'systematic discipline.' At least superficially, the use of the term "system" in theological discourse grew in surprising popularity.[117] Beyond that, however, there seemed to be growing emphases in its applications and meanings.

To begin with, in keeping with the antagonism between the warring factions of the Reformation, the dual application of system in Keckermann (Lucianist vs. the *corpus integrum*) was divided among the Lutheran and Reformed camps. Most Lutheran theologians preferred the structural (*corpus integrum*) aspect, while the Reformed

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[116] Ritschl, *System*, 37.

[117] Ibid., 43.

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emphasized the emphasis on process (Lucianist).[118] In fact, though they made generous

use of the term, the Reformed theologians were reluctant to apply "system" to the body of

doctrine as a noun, but rather preferred to use it as an adverb (*systematicus*) describing

the process of proper methodology, or even as an adjective for the finished product

(*theologia systematica*).[119] The impact of the linguistic shift is obvious, however, and

eventually, this tendency even eclipsed the Melanchthonist terminology of *loci*

communes.[120]

    Of the many Lutherans who were using the "system" terminology, Ritschl singles

out Abraham Calov (1612-1686). In his *Systema locorum theologicorum* (1655), Calov

suggests that theology can be broken into two general branches of endeavor: the

katechetische—dealing with the instruction of novices, and *akroamatische*—what drives

the universities.[121] The latter group he divides into the "exegetical, didactic, polemic,

ascetics, ecclesiastic, casuistic, and supplementally the patristic and scholastic."[122] Then,

he goes on to further subdivide didactic theology into "polemic and systematic."[123]

Finally, having constructed this complex framework of the discipline of theology, and

after locating 'systematic theology', he supplies an even more explicit explanation of

didactic/systematic theology as "a process of σωματοποίησις where common loci are

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[118] Ibid., 43, 44.

[119] Ibid., 44.

[120] Ibid., 37.

[121] Ibid., 44.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid., 45.

integrated into a unified body of faith yielding theological definitions, causes, effects, divisions, concepts, oppositions, etc."[124]

Other than the above examples, Ritschl suggests some broad developments in university curriculum that were impacted by this new terminology. First he points out the tendency of theologians to combine more and more the disciplines of dogmatic, didactic, and polemic theology under the new category *theologia systematicus.*[125] In this way, any theological endeavor that invoked the systematic method was considered part of this emerging new discipline of "systematic theology."

Consequently, this led to another phenomenon in the order of the university curricula: the promotion of moral theology and its association with systematic theology.[126] Beginning with Georg Calixt's *Epitome theology moralis* (1634), ethics was beginning to enjoy a degree of independence from theology, but it was Calixt's student John Conrad Durr in his *Enchiridion theologiae moralis* (1662) who produced the first stand-alone moral theology among the Lutherans,[127] and it was the systematic method that made this development possible.[128]

The next development that Ritschl highlights is an interesting discussion among the system enthusiasts concerning which historical literature could be considered the first theological "system." Here Ritschl describes in detail the growing conviction among Lutheran and Reformed theologians that the systematic form did not originate with them

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[124] Ibid. See also Andrew Quenstedt, *Theologia didactico-polemica sive systema theologicum* (Wittenberg, 1685).

[125] Ritschl, *System*, 45.

[126] Ibid., 46, 47.

[127] Ibid., 47.

but that it was an enduring principle that they inherited from old. Consequently,

controversy arose as to "when and from whom was the first theological/philosophical

system introduced?"[129] Consequently, though the dialogue that ensued added little to the

meaning of the term "system," these debates highlight the latitude of the different

understandings of what this word actually means and reinforces the importance of

clarifying its definition as it is used in theology.

Finally, in the wake of the controversy over the first theological system and what

that might mean, there arose a growing backlash of anti-system attitudes especially

among the ranks of the Pietists, rallied by Robert Barclay.[130] Referring to this short

period as one of many through history, Christian Thomasius observed that "through all

time the systematic form has had to endure great opposition from the enemies of good

order." [131] But in spite of it all, he argues that theological systems are "always good"

even if their creators are "ignorant."[132]

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[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid., 48.

[130] Ibid., 53.

[131] "*Systemata* are works which deal with a science in a manor that is not only detailed but in which the elements included are joined together" (Christian Thomasius, "System," *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexikon aller Wissenschafften und Künste*, ed. Johann Heinrich Zedler, vol. 41 [Halle: J. H. Zedler, 1732], 1209).

[132] "According to the common proverb, a good teacher is one who can distinguish the good from the bad. Therefore, *systemata theologiae* are always good, even if their creators are ignorant. . . . *Systemata* have the following benefits: 1) one finds the system's articles are in great detail, as in the *libris symbolicis* . . . ; 2) therefore, in *systematibus* everything is in better order and simpler as in a lexicon; 3) also one learns through the thorough application of the *systematum* to understand the kernel or essence of the Holy Scriptures more and more. This is made possible because we are brought more frequently to the most important passages and are led to experience, as though through our senses, the reality of the message. And finally, 4) through science one can describe— *ex systematibus*—the significance of our current times, address them with proper

Therefore, by the end of the eighteenth century, the concept of *system* had grown in popularity (or infamy) in theology to the point that it was coming to be recognized as a necessary addition to any title if one wanted to be taken seriously. Furthermore, in both the Lutheran and Reformed camps, theologians were using the language of *system* to synthesize knowledge across many if not all of the liberal arts and hard sciences.[133] Again, however, there was no significant discussion or explanation augmenting or expanding the meaning of system in theology during this phase. Theology and philosophy were more "systematic," but there was no expansion of the definition of the term or its idea. Meanwhile, in Philosophy, the Cartesian critical revolution had gotten well under way and, by the end of the seventeenth century, the *esprit de critique* was on a collision course with the *esprit de système*.

System in the Age of Criticism

During the seventeenth century the usage of the system expression spread throughout philosophy and the sciences, though without much interpretive explanation.[134] Musical terminology had maintained the term since antiquity as a reference.[135] It was also important in Astronomy from the Ptolomic, Copernican, Tychonian, and Semi-

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polemical theology, and skillfully defend the faith in the heat of controversy" (Thomasius, "System," *Universal-Lexikon*, 1210–1213).

[133] This was especially true in those circles that were friendly to Aristotle (Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 23ff.; Funkenstein, *Theology*, 6).

[134] Ritschl, *System*, 55.

[135] Ibid. See also Thomasius, "System," *Universal-Lexikon*, 1213–1214.

Tychonian systems or solar systems in the material sense.[136] And already by the middle of the eighteenth century there were references to the circulatory and nervous systems.[137]

Eventually, however, as the natural philosophers pondered the implications of the seemingly universal applications of systems to almost all disciplines in growing popularity, a few began to theorize about the foundational character of this idea to all thought. In the *Universal-Lexikon*, Thomasius explains that the systematic phenomena can be considered a natural, inevitable discovery because *systematic ingenia* is the quality or nature of things as such.[138] But probably the first real philosophical treatment of the term came with Nicolas Malebranche.

Malebranche (1638-1715)

Among those philosophers suggesting this foundational role of system, Ritschl credits Nicolas Malebranche as the one who raised the term system from a mere description of a particular body of thought to its own full concept or idea.[139] Interestingly, however, he does not approach the concept directly but from the perspective of an analysis of the *novorum systemorum inventoribus* (the new system inventors).[140] That is, he extracted the idea from its most capable wielders by looking at what qualified them to perceive and/or build the systems they made famous.[141]

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[136] Ritschl, *System*, 55.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Thomasius, "System," *Universal-Lexikon*, 1222.

[139] Ritschl, *System*, 58.

[140] Ibid., 56; Nicolas Malebranche, *De inquirenda veritate libri sex* (Geneva: Typis and sumptibus societatis, 1691), 157.

[141] Of course still quite a while before phenomemology was 'invented' in philosophy this is a good example of the fact that, like the term "system,"

By applying the Cartesian elevation of the *mind* as active agent to the idea of system, Malebranche is able to show that systematic knowledge is possible because the mind knows the language—so to speak—of the system.[142] Of course, this capability is only possible inasmuch as the substance of Mind is shared by both God and humans relative to their connection to God and is evidenced by the "clear and distinct"-ness of the conception.[143] Thus as one 'participates' in the mind of God, conceiving the unity of the contents of both the universal mind and extension, it is possible to reconstruct, if only in a limited sense, a system of knowledge.[144] It is no wonder he was accused of Spinozism, but Malebranche softened his tribute, by admitting his regret that this ability is quite rare, if not even superhuman, and is more often imitated poorly than accurately demonstrated.[145]

Thus, in terms of contribution, Malebranche represents at least two points of departure concerning the role of system in theology and philosophy: The first is an expansion of the aspect of *system as structure*, implying that one can be either active or passive in their knowledge of a system. The other point of departure is an expansion of the other aspect of *system as process* in that the extent to which one participates in the mind of God is proportionate to their ability to perceive system.[146] Thus, in spite of his

"phenomenology" was a term that was introduced to describe something that was not so new.

[142] Ritschl, *System*, 56–57.

[143] Ibid., 57; Malebranche, *De inquirenda*, 157ff.; Funkenstein, *Theology*, 88.

[144] Malebranche, *De inquirenda*, 157.

[145] Ibid., 159.

[146] Ibid., 157; Funkenstein, *Theology*, 88.

disclaimers, with his *De inquirenda*, Malebranche had set the stage for the

Enlightenment's flirtation with monism and the systematic unity of knowledge.[147]

In addition to the positive implication above, however, Malebranche's idea of the

participation in the divine being prerequisite for system construction or comprehension

implies a strong negative or conditional element in the meaning of the term system. That

is, without much explanation thereof, Malebranche is suggesting that neither the

construction nor the perception of systems is possible without a transcendent, or

specifically "divine," vantage point. This anticipates similar conditions indicated by later

discussions, which are highlighted further below. Suffice it here to say that Malebranche

implies a transcendent or divine condition in either the construction or perception of a

system.

Leibniz (1646-1716)

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz's treatment of 'system' was more direct than that

of Malebranche. Building on the work of his predecessor and in response to both

Spinoza and Descartes, Leibniz speaks of his "new word-clarifying system," "system of

causes," or even his most personal expression, "*mon système,*" through which he hoped to

clarify some of the ambiguities and apparent contradictions in the new physics of his

time.[148] In fact, as Ritschl points out, Leibniz almost abuses the usefulness of the term

'system' in that he uses the word too often to "soften" the controversial nature of many of

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[147] Funkenstein, *Theology*, 88.

[148] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Opera omnia*, ed. Ludwig Dutens (Geneva: Apud Fratres de Tournes, 1768), 49; Ritschl, *System*, 59.

his treatises.[149] Ritschl suggests that this was possibly an attempt to present his ideas in a 'tentative' or 'hypothetical' light in order to make them more likely to be received favorably.[150]

From another perspective, rather than to promote ambiguity, his use of this term was possibly due to Leibniz's desire to reconcile the mind-body/thought-extension problem that had been further agitated since Descartes. For Leibniz, as an alternative to Spinoza's *monism*, this dichotomy could be resolved by his idea of a *systema harmoniae praestabilitae* (system of pre-established harmony).[151] Through this concept, coupled with his idea of *monads*, Leibniz attempted to bridge the gap in causality between the mind and extended objects.[152]

But beyond the specific problem of thought/extension causality, Leibniz had a passion "to capture the unity-within-the-multiplicity of every single thing and of everything as a whole."[153] To Leibniz, "harmony is unity in variety. . . . Harmony is when many things are reduced to some unity. For where there is no variety, there is no harmony. . . . Conversely, where there is variety without order, without proportion, there is no harmony."[154]

Thus to facilitate his idea of harmony and unity Leibniz turns to the term "system." It was his premise, therefore, that "harmony is always a property of a 'system'

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[149] Ritschl, *System*, 59, 60.

[150] Ibid., 60.

[151] Leibniz, *Opera omnia*, 49.

[152] Ibid., 50ff.

[153] Funkenstein, *Theology*, 98.

[154] Donald Rutherford, *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 31.

of things: a plurality of distinct entities whose mutual order bestows on them a type of collective unity."[155] And from this connection, Leibniz goes on to generously apply the term system to any subject that suggests possible internal contradictions in order to show the harmony and unity of all is only veiled by God's penchant for variety and our intellectual and spiritual limitations.[156]

Unfortunately, however, this tells us little about the actual meaning of system other than it is some kind of 'mystery glue' that unites diverse elements. Possibly, Leibniz's usage of the term system can best be understood in light of his concept of *monads*. Where he is lacking in an explanation of system, he goes in considerable depth explaining his monads, which function as microscopic condensations of *everything*: "it is a perpetual living mirror of the universe."[157] Leibniz also uses the terms *echantillon* ("sample," "cross-section," or "core") and *entelechie* ("having the end within itself").[158] And as such, each monad, as a type of 'soul' in each "compound," is able to relate seamlessly with every other of the infinite possible monads, making the sum of all parts of the universe a harmonious unity.[159]

Thus, Leibniz offers a couple of significant contributions in terms of the philosophical usage of the term "system." First, till now, the general idea was that a system is a special type of whole, in which its constituent parts were ordered or arranged by some systematically inclined builder of systems, whether it be God in the case of the

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[155] Ibid.

[156] Ritschl, *System*, 60.

[157] Leibniz, *Opera omnia*, 50.

[158] Ibid., 51.

[159] Ibid., 52.

universe or some theologian in the case of a theological system. But, here, Leibniz is

suggesting that the constituent parts are only ordered and arranged inasmuch as they fit

together. As such, he is suggesting the possibility that the parts of a system can be

ordered, arranged, and conjoined into a whole by their own agency. But by implication,

the parts of a system can be understood as either *active* (as in Leibniz's view) or *passive*

as with the construction of a house.

Leibniz's second contribution is that within a system there is a complete

condensation of the end or whole represented thereby. In other words, in at least one of

the parts of a given system (in Leibniz's view the most basic and pervasive parts, the

monads) there is an encapsulation or anticipation of the 'whole' in terms of structure and

the 'end' in terms of process. And, like Malebranche, Leibniz reserves the agency

implied by these parts to the transcendent pre-established harmony of God. And both of

these conditions are examined more explicitly below.

Wolff (1679-1754)

As his best-known student, Christian Wolff further refined much of Leibniz's

work and advanced the idea and application of the role of system in philosophy.

Interestingly, Wolff does not include the word "system" in any of the titles of his major

works. One can only guess his reason for this despite the increasing popularity of

"systems" of all kinds and the fact that Wolff speaks much about system in the content of

his works.[160]

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[160] Ritschl, *System*, 60.

In spite of his reluctance to include it in his titles, in *Philosophia rationalissive logica*, Wolff calls his own metaphysics "*systema meum metaphysicum*."[161] In a more direct statement, he explains that "the accepted concept of system [consists in] truths stitched together and joined by chosen suitable ends."[162] Wolff further explains that "under a system one can understand and see how the truths are linked with principles in a conglomerate [*congerium*]."[163] This method of linking truths Wolff labels *systema veri nominu*, much like Malebranche's *systema verum*.[164]

But Wolff is not content with the above explanation and goes on to make further qualifications distinguishing system from other types of order. In one such case, he compares the phenomenon of system to the human body, saying that it is "not merely a mixture of truth by some type of order," but that it is "integrated" like "the organs of the body, maintaining somehow the right order of purpose."[165] Concerning this distinction, Wolff further emphasizes that what is important is not just the truths being linked or the act of linking but that, in a proper system, the truths are able to be linked and it is this characteristic of the individual truths being linkable that gives the "conglomerate" the distinction of being a whole.[166]

In another statement relating to the metaphor of physiology, Wolff strengthens his position on the linkability of truth, suggesting a comparison with the work of a surgeon:

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[161] Christian Wolff, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Jean École et al. (New York: Olms, 1962), 542.

[162] Ibid., 635.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid., 440.

[166] Ibid.

"As the scalpel dissects the organs, so the truths of a system can be identified and classified according to order as demonstrated by the ability of even inexperienced individuals to make simple orderings of truth."[167] Of course, here, Wolff has come almost full circle from Malebranche in that the latter insisted that the system phenomenon could be attributed to the genius, enlightenment, and/or spiritual initiation of the individuals performing the task. Wolff, on the other hand, is saying here that it is the truths themselves, the components of the system, that lead the "surgeon" to deduce their relationship to each other and to the whole.[168]

In summary, Wolf sought the middle ground between Melabranche and Leibniz in that, though he wasn't willing to grant the individual parts of the system the same ultimacy as Leibniz had, Wolff insisted that no matter how skilled the system artisan, the parts could only be linked according to their preordained place in the greater order of the whole. In other words, the individual parts in the structure of a system are best understood by their contribution to the purpose of the organism. Furthermore, with the organism metaphor, Wolff reinforces the dual aspects of *structure* and *process* with their interdependence.

Before moving on, it should be remembered that, among the many indirect influences, the philosophy of Leibniz and Wolff played a considerable role in Immanuel Kant's development through his professor, Martin Knutzen.[169] Of course, Kant's contribution to the concept of system is considerable and is discussed below with further

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[167] Ibid.

[168] Ritschl, *System*, 61.

discussion of his possible influences. Before that, however, we turn our attention to a lesser-known figure, Johann Heinrich Lambert.

Lambert (1728-1777)

Lambert was best known for his work in mathematics and astronomy, but he is also known in philosophy as the first to coin the term "phenomenology" and for providing at least the groundwork for the discipline of the same.[170] Of course as a student of Wolff and close friend of Kant, Lambert serves as an important link in the development of the use of system in philosophy. Actually Ritschl considers Lambert probably the most articulate theoretician of system in the history of the idea.[171] Furthermore, Siegwart claims that Lambert is the most significant pre-curser to the general systems theory movement.[172]

In his recent translation of some of Lambert's philosophical works, *Texte zur Systematologie und zur Theorie der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis*, Siegwart provides a compilation of what remains of three important treatises attributed to Lambert: "Von der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis,"[173] "Allgemeine Anlage zur Grundlehre,"[174] and

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[169] Karl Ameriks, "Introduction" to Gary Hatfield, *Kant: Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics: With Selections from the Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xii.

[170] Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2000), 6. It is interesting to note the parallels between the decline of system and the rise of phenomenology, especially when considering the subjective aspects of systematic thinking.

[171] Ritschl, *System*, 63.

[172] Lambert, *Texte*, lxx.

[173] Johann Heinrich Lambert, *Neues Organon oder Gedanken über die Erforschung und Bezeichnung des Wahren und dessen Unterscheidung vom Irrtum und Schein*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Johann Wendler, 1764).

"Fragment einer Systematologie."[175] The purpose of this compilation was to provide a focused historical resource for contemporary general systems theory in the 1980s.

The first treatise, "Von der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis," is Lambert's bid for a logical foundation for philosophy. The second, "Allgemeine Anglage zur Grundlehre," is an architechtonic or archetypical framework of philosophical principles. And finally the third and final treatise, "Fragment einer Systematology," is a theoretical definition of system as it is used in theology and philosophy with further typological explanation of different types of systems and their characteristics and interrelationships. This last fragment includes a complete connotative definition and at least the beginnings of a thorough typology of philosophical and theological systems and should be discussed in detail.

The "systematology" fragment is composed of forty-seven numbered paragraphs divided into three parts: "overview of system," "the diversity of systems," and "the purpose of systems." In the first paragraph, Lambert begins with an explanation of the difficulty involved in defining system, due to the combined generality and complexity of the concept.[176] And of course with the multiplication of works claiming to be systems, the confusion is compounded. Thus, Lambert argues that not every "whole" or

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[174] Johann Heinrich Lambert, *Anlage zur Architectonic, oder Theorie des einfachen und des Ersten in der philosophischen und des Ersten in der philosophischen und mathematischen Erkenntnis*, 2 vols. (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1771).

[175] Johann Heinrich Lambert, *Logische und philosophische Abhandlungen*, 2 vols. (Berlin: dem herausgeber, 1782–1787).

[176] Lambert, *Texte*, 125.

"patchwork" can be called a "system," which underscores the importance of a precise definition of this term.[177]

Consequently, in the next paragraph he points out what types of wholes aren't systems:

> We can hereby judiciously move ahead and deny the application of the term *system* to anything that one would call a, *chaos*, *mixture*, *pile*, *clump*, *confusion*, *disruption*, etc. Furthermore, any entity that can be called truly *simple*, is not a system. Therefore, not every *whole* can be called a *system*, as has already been noticed.[178]

Having enumerated some of the things that system is not, Lambert goes on to explain the characteristics that distinguish systems from other wholes:

> A system will therefore have parts. And to be sure, several are necessary. These parts must therefore be distinct and knowable. And all parts should be arranged or ordered according to a purpose and by means of such are all connected with each other. In this way the purpose provided determines the nature of the whole.[179]

In the fourth paragraph he offers a definition: "I understand a system to be a *purposive, composite, whole*."[180] But before further explanation, Lambert shrinks from the distraction of defining the words used in the definition, and proceeds instead to enumerate the characteristics (*Bestandteilchen*) that distinguish what he considers true examples of system from the counterfeits.[181] He presents these characteristics in six categories beginning with a definitive statement:

I. A system consists of:
   A. *Parts*, the parts are connected with each other, are therefore interdependent—necessitate, presuppose, or attract each other.

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[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid., 125–126.

[179] Ibid., 126.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid.

B. *Binding forces*, part to part, part to whole, or all parts together.
C. *One common thread*, which makes the whole from the parts, ordinarily rises from a binding force or is the source of the force.
D. *One common purpose*, the achievement of which the system and its parts are dedicated, configured, ordered, joined and connected.

II. A system requires:
A. *Compatibility,* of the parts with each other and with the binding force.
B. *Endurance,* and *homogeneity*
C. *Unity*, that the system must be a *whole* whereby each part *requires, presupposes*, or *attracts* the others.

III. With a system comes:
A. *Laws* or *rules*, all of which are derived from the *purpose* of the system and the *condition of persistence* and which are more or less *subordinated*.
B. A kind of *foundation*, upon which the system is based or grounded.
C. An external *form, shape, cosmetics, symmetry, local order*, etc.

IV. The construction of a system involves:
A. Beginning with the purpose, calling and distributing of parts, and then applying the binding forces.
B. Or, if, in the beginning, some of the parts are present already, bringing the rest according to the purpose.
C. Or, beginning with the binding forces, then applying the purpose letting the parts fall into place.

V. The system in relation to other systems:
A. Either it *merges* with it/them.
B. Or it only *partly joins* (overlaps) it/them.
C. Or one is *dependant* on another.
D. Or they are *interdependent*.

VI. System in relation to the power of knowledge:
A. By theory.
B. By comparison with others.[182]

Lambert finishes the overview by explaining that this "table" (*Tabelle*) is a compromise between something more general that might not distinguish a system from other types of wholes, and something too specific so as to limit the definition to only certain types of systems.[183] In showing the importance of this compromise he offers the

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[182] Ibid., 127–128.

[183] Ibid., 128.

example of the "foundation" aspect of a system, which, when sought after in a variety of systems, the need for generality "becomes apparent."[184]

Thus, it can be discouraging to attempt to develop an absolute "science of systems" in terms of analysis.[185] One can be much more scientific in the analysis of particular systems due to the extreme variety. Remember, it had already been observed that system is a quality that is common to all of nature, an observation which was becoming a central motif in the enlightenment.[186] In the meantime, however, from the insights drawn from these particulars, Lambert argues that a "general systematology" is still useful and productive as it "exposes confusion, leads to order, gives direction for constructing ideals, and reveals lacuna. Furthermore, it facilitates analysis, invention, arrangement, construction, maintenance, and improvement of the particular existing

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[184] "I stated in the above table that every system has a kind of *foundation*, whereupon it is based or grounded. One has to admit this is generally accepted, but as such, the subtlety is still not understood. Whereas, when one looks for a foundation in various kinds of systems the need for generality becomes apparent. This word (*Grundlage*) as it is used here comes from the metaphor of a building, which could not be comprehended without a foundation (*Grunde*). Therefore, in other systems something similar should be present. But as one looks at the variety of systems it becomes evident that there are almost as many 'foundations' as there are systems. Each musical piece has its base melody (*Grundton*). A painting has a base layer (*Gründung*). Each treatise has one or more premises (*Hauptartikel*). Machines are mounted on a pedestal (*Gestell*). A ship is not righted by the water, rather it is the bilge (*Schiffsboden*) or the keel that is the ship's foundation. In linguistics there is the root (*Wurzelwörter*). In other cases the foundation can be related to the purpose or binding forces. . . . Thus, when one inquires this of the system of the universe (*Weltsysteme*) it seems as though it is the force of *gravity*, outstretched through space, that holds in sway the wandering heavenly bodies" (Lambert, *Texte*, 129).

[185] Ibid., 130.

[186] Ritschl, *System*, 55; Thomasius, "System," *Universal-Lexikon*, 1222.

systems."[187] Therefore, he proceeds in his systematology while using examples of

particular systems, but remaining on the level of "metaphysical generality."[188]

In the second part, Lambert suggests that we can overcome the overwhelming

variety of systems by the use of categories for comparison (*Hauptklassen zu teilen*).[189] In

this way we can group a number of examples of system under a common characteristic.

Of course these categories can be drawn from the table already provided so systems can

be compared by their parts, common thread, how they were constructed, etc.[190] To this

end, Lambert recommends beginning with what he called the "binding forces" for this.[191]

By so doing, all systems can be divided into only three categories: systems bound by (1)

the power of reason, (2) the power of the will, and (3) the mechanistic powers

(*mechanischen Kräfte*) found in nature.[192] Then to this he adds some examples to

strengthen his argument:

I. Systems articulated through *the power of reason*:
   A. The system of universal truth.
   B. Particular systems of the sciences, theories, etc.
   C. Thought patterns (*Denkarten*) of particular people groups.
   D. Narratives, Fables, Poetry, etc.
II. Systems articulated through *the power of the will*:
   A. Systems of legislation.
   B. Contracts.
   C. Societies.
   D. States.
III. Systems articulated through *mechanistic power*:
   A. The universe (*Der Weltbau*).
   B. Particular solar or planetary systems.

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[187] Lambert, *Texte*, 130.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Ibid., 131.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid., 132.

[192] Ibid.

C. The earth.
D. Particular ecological systems.
E. Systems of Art, machines, buildings, instruments, etc.
F. Systems of causes and effects.[193]

Of course these distinctions are not to say, for instance, that reason has no part in how a society or a machine comes into existence.[194] But, a society does not generate out of abstract reason alone. Someone has to will it so, and thus the *will* is the force that is credited.[195] "It follows, therefore, that these types of binding forces correspond to types of systems which can be categorized conveniently into: intellectual systems, moral/political systems, and organic/physical systems."[196]

Now, having established these three categories, within each the systems can be further ordered. In the third part of his fragment, Lambert explains that this further order is best done according to the purposes associated with the various systems.[197] Of course, this has its own problems with ambiguity in that the purposes which are intended are not always possible or appropriate, much less actually achieved. Therefore, he suggests two methods of determining the actual purpose associated with a given system:

1. If a system or even just the contents and binding powers is given, the purpose to be achieved generally or in given circumstances can be ascertained.
2. If only the purpose is known, the system(s) capable of its achievement are sought out.[198]

Here it can be pointed out that these two methods correspond with synthetic and analytic apprehension.[199] But regardless of which method is used, the process ultimately

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[193] Ibid.

[194] Ibid.

[195] Ibid., 133.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Ibid., 139ff.

involves the succession of means-to-ends, where, either the end is discovered from what is implied by the means chosen, or the means are discovered by what is implied by the purpose achieved.   In the last ten paragraphs of this last part of the fragment, Lambert explains further this succession of means-to-ends with the correlative distinction between ideal means and available means.[200]

Unfortunately there is no indication of what came after the forty-seventh paragraph, which ends rather abruptly in the midst of this explanation. And as the missing section is in the concluding portion of the fragment, we are left with only a guess at much of Lambert's overall conclusions. Nevertheless, this fragment still represents the most complete conceptual explanation of the meaning of system before or since Lambert's time. And, though Lambert was explaining the general idea of system, not just cognitive systems, his overall analysis is helpful, in that he has not only pointed out the distinctions between cognitive, social, and extended systems, but he has also contributed to the terminology that can be used to describe the elements within the definition of system—"whole," "parts," "joining powers," "foundation," etc.

Kant (1724-1804)

Now both Wolff and Lambert together laid the ground from which probably the best-known system argument was launched.[201] In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant provides a whole chapter on "The Architectonic of Pure Reason," which he begins

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[198] Ibid., 140.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ibid., 141–144.

[201] For more on Kant's debt to Wolff and Lambert, see Ritschl, *System*, 68; and Rescher, *Cognitive Systematization*, 6–8.

with the following explanation: "By the term *Architectoic* I mean the art of constructing a system. Without systematic unity, our knowledge cannot become science; it will be an aggregate, and not a system. Thus Architectonic is the doctrine of the scientific in cognition, and therefore necessarily forms part of our Methodology."[202] And in this statement, probably more than any other thinker, Kant has secured a place for this term in the history of ideas. Kant's use of the term and its corresponding idea in the first critique and throughout his overall program could fill many pages, but for the purposes of this study, some of the primary characteristics and contributions of his use of this term can be highlighted.

To Kant, the goal of reason and subsequently the enlightenment is the holistic compilation of all of our knowledge in the form of a system.[203] This goal is not something imposed from without, but an internal drive within our faculty of reason: "If we review our cognitions in their entire extent, we shall find that the peculiar business of reason is to arrange them into a system."[204] And even stronger, he claims that this compulsion is required by "the law of reason," and without which, "we should not possess a faculty of reason . . . nor in the absence of this, any proper and sufficient criterion of empirical truth."[205] And hence, "we must presuppose the idea of the systematic unity of nature to possess objective validity and necessity."[206] Thus the first characteristic of Kant's conception of system is that it is tantamount to the nature of

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[202] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1990), 466.

[203] Ibid, 361, 466ff.

[204] Ibid., 361.

[205] Ibid., 365.

reason itself that it must order knowledge, whether of a priori intellectual ideas or of

nature itself into the form of a system.

The second characteristic is Kant's definition of system. In generous

transparency he explains that "by a system I mean the unity of various cognitions under

one idea."[207] And in another instance, he explains that arranging things in a system is "to

give them connection according to a principle."[208] Thus the parts (bits of knowledge,

concepts, cognitions, etc.) together form a whole by virtue of their relationship (*der*

Zusammenhang) to a single arch-principle.

Also implied by Kant's definition is that the unity of a system involves not only

the relationships of the parts to the principle but that the principle defines their

relationship to each other as well.[209] In fact, according to Kant, in addition to

determining which parts are included and the relation of each to the whole and each

other, within this single principle is contained "the end and the form of the whole"

itself.[210]

Without too much analysis, it is not difficult to see the main points being made

concerning the definition of system. According to Kant's definition of system, by a

single principle, (1) the various parts of the system are united, and (2) their relationships

and positions are determined. Then in this latter explanation, he adds that in this

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[206] Ibid.

[207] Ibid., 466.

[208] Ibid., 361.

[209] "This unity presupposes and idea—the idea of the form of the whole (of cognition), preceding the determinate cognition of the parts, and containing the conditions which determine *a priori* to every part its place and relation to the other parts of the whole system" (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 361).

determining principle is also included the (3) end and (4) the whole itself, both of which

also inform–literally–the parts. Thus the parts are united, related, given positions and

limits and have their ultimate purpose fulfilled in the principle of the system.

Finally, a third important characteristic of Kant's definition of system is the

apparent one-sidedness of the process of systematization. The necessity of systematicity

does not rise empirically as there is not sufficient evidence from experience to support

it.[211] This is because of the thrust of the whole first critique in that "objects conform to

our knowledge, rather than our knowledge conforming to objects," therefore, "we do not

find a complete system of nature in the world, rather, we seek one."[212] Thus, through the

"employment" of our reason, the knowledge we acquire is 'informed' systematically, that

is, in order to understand something, we super-impose system upon it.

Before looking at how Kant applies his definition, a couple other points should be

made. First, Kant further explicates his definition by making it clear what a system is

not. Following Keckermann's, Lambert's, and Wolff's definitions, Kant insists that a

system is not an "aggregate" but an "organism."[213] To Kant, an aggregate in this context

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[210] Ibid., 467.

[211] "On the other hand, the method of investigating the order of nature in the light of this principle, and the maxim which requires us to regard this order—it being still undetermined how far it extends—as really existing in nature, is beyond doubt a legitimate and excellent principle of reason—a principle which extends farther than any experience or observation of ours and which, without giving us any positive knowledge of anything in the region of experience, guides us to the goal of systematic unity" (ibid., 375).

[212] Patricia M. Matthews, *The Significance of Beauty: Kant on Feeling and the System of the Mind* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 4, 5.

[213] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 467.

finds its unity from without, while an organism is ordered by some internal principle.[214]

In other words, in an aggregate, the parts are "coordinated" with each other by some

external agent adding items to a collection.[215]

Interestingly, this more-than-aggregate nature of the system is also what Kant

considers the link between system and science.[216] It has already been seen in the other

definitions and can be found throughout Kant's writings that any body of knowledge that

can be legitimately termed a system, according to the above definitions, is a science.[217]

Here Kant explicates what had only been implied by practice before, that all disciplines

of knowledge, especially Theology, Philosophy, and Science, are governed by a single

methodological priority: that system is the preferred (for some, the only) form that

knowledge should take.

Of course, this brings us to Kant's more ambitious objectives, the universal unity

of all knowledge in a single system:

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[214] "The whole is thus an organism (*articulatio*), and not an aggregate (*coacervatio*); it may grow from within (*per intussusceptionem*), but it cannot increase by external additions (*per appositionem*). It is, thus, like an animal body, the growth of which does not add any limb, but, without changing their proportions, makes each in its sphere stronger and more active" (ibid., 467).

[215] "The completeness which we require is possible only by means of an idea of the totality of the a priori cognition of the understanding, and through the thereby determined division of the conceptions which form the said whole; consequently, only by means of their connection in a system" (ibid., 52).

[216] Ibid.

[217] Ibid., 470; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Cambridge: Hackett, 2002), 114; "Every science is a sysem in its own right" (idem, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar [Cambridge: Hackett, 1987], 261); "Every doctrine constituting a system, namely, a whole of cognition, is termed a science" (idem, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Gary Hatfield [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 6).

Thus is not only every system organized according to its own idea, but all are united into one grand system of human knowledge, of which they form members. For this reason it is possible to frame an architectonic of all human cognition, the formation of which at the present time, considering the immense materials collected or to be found in the ruins of old systems, would not indeed be very difficult.[218]

Thus Kant was hopeful of an imminent completion of the enlightenment ideal of incorporating all human knowledge into a systematic meta-science of "common sense" which in turn would be easily expanded as new discoveries were assimilated with ease into this grand structure. And though Kant was unable to see this task completed in his own time, he was confident that his work was sufficient to provide the ground for success in such a task.[219] To be a secure, however, this foundation must include an absolute principle by which all knowledge could be articulated. Consequently, by the end of the second critique, Kant confessed hopefully that "someday," perhaps, we could have "insight into the unity of the entire pure power of reason (theoretical as well as practical) and to derive everything from one principle—this being the unavoidable need of human reason, which finds full satisfaction only in a completely systematic unity of its cognitions."[220]

Then, before beginning the third critique, Kant felt he had found this illusive keystone that bridges "the gap in the system of our cognitive powers, and hence opens up a striking and–I think–most promising prospect [for] a complete system of all the mental

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[218] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 468.

[219] Kant, *Prolegomena*, 5ff.; Ritschl, *System*, 71; K. L. Reinhold, "The Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge," in *Between Kant and Hegel*, trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Hackett, 1985), 66.

[220] Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 116.

powers."[221] According to him, it is in "*aesthetic* judgment" that we find the missing link

to unite the great system:

> Thus we find a system of the mental powers in their relation to nature and to freedom, each having its own *determinative* a priori principles and hence constituting the two parts of philosophy (theoretical and practical) as a doctrinal system, as well as a transition by means of judgment, which connects the two parts through a principle of its own.[222]

More specifically, it is the "feeling" of (natural) beauty, which ultimately "reveals

to us a technic [*sic*] of nature that allows us to present nature as a system in terms of laws

whose principle we do not find anywhere in our understanding: the principle of a

purposiveness directed to our use of judgment as regards appearances."[223] And this

principle, according to Patricia M. Matthews, is the "connection made between

theoretical and practical reason through feeling," which "helps Kant complete what he

refers to as the unity of reason," which is the product of system.[224]

Now, whether or not we agree with it, Kant's explanation is probably the most

explicit and intentional definition of system especially as he applies it to his own

philosophical ambitions:

> If my reader has been kind and patient enough to accompany me on this hitherto untravelled [*sic*] route, he can now judge whether, if he and others will contribute their exertions towards making this narrow foot-path a high-road of thought, that,

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[221] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 434.

[222] Ibid., 436.

[223] Ibid., 99.

[224] Matthews, *Significance*, 1. Hans Georg Gadamer similarly explains that "this is the systematic significance that the problem of natural beauty has for Kant: *it grounds the central position of teleology*. Natural beauty alone, not art, can assist in legitimating the concept of purpose in judging nature. This systematic reason alone, the 'pure' judgment of taste provides the indispensable basis of the third critique" (Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall [New York: Continuum, 1999], 54–55).

which many centuries have failed to accomplish, may not be executed before the close of the present–namely, to bring Reason to perfect contentment in regard to that which has always, but without permanent results, occupied her powers and engaged her ardent desire for knowledge.[225]

Even though Kant differed little in his reiteration of the aspects of the definition of system that had been discussed up till his time, one of his most welcome contributions is his reluctance to take the reader's understanding of the meaning of this term for granted in his many explications of what he intends in his usage. Further, he expands the subjective aspect of cognitive systems by his insistence that system is more than just one way to organize knowledge, but that it is simply how we think; we look for systems in our knowledge. But possibly his greatest contribution is his development of the aspect of an organizing principle. Before Kant, much of the emphasis had been placed on the system-builders, the parts, or the whole. Kant shifted this emphasis from these things to rest squarely on the organizing principle, which he believed to be found in the human experience of beauty.

After Kant's contribution, Ritschl places the end of "systematics, in the strict sense," in that, in the thorough formulations of Wolff, Lambert, and Kant, the definition of system is mostly exhausted.[226] Of course, in the two-plus centuries that have transpired since, there is surely more that has been said, and the concept of system has been applied to even more subjects. In terms of innovation in its usage in theology, however, Ritschl's claim has yet to be challenged. On the other hand, in terms of application and critique of the concept, the discussion continues for some time afterward.

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[225] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 480.

[226] Ritschl, *System*, 73.

Hegel (1770-1831)

In spite of profound reaction to his epistemological specifics, Kant's commission to philosophy to complete the meta-system was taken up by his successors, but only in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel is there any significant discussion of system.[227] After Kant, there is already a romantic shift away from some of the enlightenment ideals, but the methodological optimism is pursued with even greater fervor. In Hegel, this optimism reaches its apex in his bold claim to finally end the stalemate between the ongoing antagonisms in philosophy and science, thus completing 'The System.'[228]

In his first official publication, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, Hegel sets the stage for his bid to complete the system by pointing

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[227] Of the philosophers between Kant and Hegel, the most relevant to Kant's system ideals are Karl Leonhard Reinhold, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Reinhold differed little from Kant in his conception of system and was mostly occupied with promoting Kant's program (Ritschl, *System*, 74ff.). It is also interesting to note that Reinhold, in spite of his enthusiastic agreement with Kant's insistence on a single articulating principle, all but ignores Kant's choice of beauty, and suggests instead his own bid. To him, the source of discord in the system stems from subject-object problems, which are resolved in the principle of consciousness, which he offers as the articulating principle of the whole (Reinhold, "Foundation," 74). Fichte and Schelling also made their attempts at completing the system, both with much overture to the systematic ideal, but they also moved directly to the principle and the epistemological arguments without much discussion of the concept of system (Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, ed. Karl Ameriks, trans. James Hebbeler [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006]; George di Giovanni, *Between Kant and Hegel*, 1ff.; Johan Gottlieb Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); F. W. J. von Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[228] It is interesting to note here that there is no reference whatsoever to Hegel in Ritschl's historical survey.

out that philosophy has a "need" for the systematic union of its dichotomies.[229] But in actuality, it is not himself who completes it. Hegel postulates that this need will "satisfy itself" by "the principle of absolute identity."[230] This principle is how Hegel proposes the system will be finally completed, but not by the external workings of individual philosophers upon the system from without, but rather as a

> self-production of Reason the Absolute shapes itself into an objective totality, which is a whole in itself held fast and complete, having no ground outside itself, but founded by itself in its beginning, middle, and end. . . . Reason then unites this objective totality with the opposite subjective totality to form the infinite world-intuition, whose expansion has at the same time contracted into the richest and simplest identity.[231]

Therefore the first characteristic of Hegel's concept of system is its self-generation as Absolute subject. By positing the principle of the Absolute, Hegel introduces a system-as-subject in which every part is also the whole knowing itself ("in-itself" and "for-itself") and thus is able to find itself, differentiate itself, and articulate itself according to its own "purposive activity."[232] This Absolute subject is not God in the traditional sense as a separate being who knows His creation in a subject-object or even subject-subject relationship. Nor is it a pan-psychism in which all minds or souls are one but separate from matter or extension. Rather, Hegel is positing a pan-theism in the purest sense of everything being within God's subjectivity.[233] Of course some entities

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[229] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1977), 89.

[230] Hegel, *Difference*, 112.

[231] Ibid., 113.

[232] Ibid., 89; G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 3, 12, 36–37.

[233] Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 263.

have more or less consciousness than others, but everyone and everything is included in God's version of Descarte's "I am."[234] Therefore, all aspects of the meaning of system are merely part of a single Subject trying to make sense of His own subjective experience.

On the other hand, the role of philosophy and its professionals is not passive in the least. Rather, as 'bits' of the Absolute consciousness, we play an important role in helping the Spirit complete its knowledge of itself ("as world") and thus fulfill its destiny.[235] This is the second characteristic of Hegel's idea of system, that the completion of knowledge is only possible as a system and the result is Science.[236]

But Hegel's idea of a system of science carries a loaded concept of completeness that goes beyond what many would consider a 'philosophy', 'system', or 'science.' "The term system is often misunderstood. It does not denote a philosophy, the principle of which is narrow and to be distinguished from others. On the contrary, a genuine philosophy makes it a principle to include every particular principle."[237] This is because,

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[234] Frederick Beiser, *Hegel* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 63–65.

[235] Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 263ff.

[236] "The true shape (*Gestalt*) in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of such truth. To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title '*love* of knowing' and be *actual* knowing—that is what I have set myself to do. The inner necessity that knowing should be Science lies in its nature, and only the systematic exposition of philosophy itself provides it" (Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 3).

[237] G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 20.

to Hegel, every attempt at a system can be considered an expression, if only partial, of the One, Absolute consciousness.[238]

It should be noted that Hegel describes this ideal 'totality' as an unfolding (*Entwicklung*) of the germ of the Absolute—"the whole veiled in its *simplicity*" into its mature perfection as the system of Science.[239] This germ, or as Hegel puts it, "the Notion"—much like the 'principle' in Kant—is ultimately replaced, or "negated," by the finished Whole, which is its destiny much like the acorn becomes the oak tree.[240] But this "negation" should not be seen as a discredit or a supplanting as philosophers are often in the habit of describing their "systems" as superior to what had come before.[241] Rather, just as the tree is 'in' the acorn, when it is grown, the acorn is 'actualized' in the tree.

This is the basis of Hegel's problematic method known today as "dialectic," and is at the core of his understanding of how system works in the unfolding of Absolute

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[238] "The stages in the evolution of the Idea there seem to follow each other by accident, and to present merely a number of different and unconnected principles, which the several systems of philosophy carry out in their own way. But it is not so. For these thousands of years the same Architect has directed the work: and that Architect is the one living Mind whose nature is to think, to bring to selfconsciousness [*sic*] what it is, and, with its being thus set as object before it, to be at the same time raised above it, and so to reach a higher stage of its own being. The different systems which the history of philosophy presents are therefore not irreconcilable with unity.

We may either say, that it is one philosophy at different degrees of maturity: or that the particular principle, which is the groundwork of each system, is but a branch of one and the same universe of thought. In philosophy the latest birth of time is the result of all the systems that have preceded it, and must include their principles; and so, if, on other grounds, it deserve the title of philosophy, will be the fullest, most comprehensive, and most adequate system of all" (Hegel, *Hegel's Logic,* 18–19).

[239] Hegel, *Phenomenology,* 7.

[240] Ibid., 1–2, 7.

[241] Ibid., 1–3.

consciousness. Unfortunately, Hegel's dialectic is often confused with the triadic, 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis,' which was popularized by one of his commentators, Friedrich Moritz Chalybäus, but this particular interpretation cannot adequately describe Hegel's dialectic.[242]

Instead of a pair of contradictory propositions being resolved by a third, which is exactly what he criticizes at the beginning of his preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel argues that it is a process of "unity-in-opposition."[243] In his book, *Hegel*, Frederick Beiser argues that Hegel is not introducing an 'alternative logic', which somehow gets around the fundamental laws of identity and contradiction ($A \neq -A$).[244] But rather, he is suggesting an alternative metaphysics in which the notion of the Absolute draws us away from the contradictions of the parts to the unity of whole.[245]

Our reason accepts diametric opposition on the basis of each side of this opposition, whether things or concepts, as being separate and autonomous ("unconditioned") entities.[246] Hegel sees this as a natural function of the faculty of reason in that analysis is how we understand anything that is not simple—we have to "take it apart."[247] This is only the beginning of the process of knowing, however, in that after we have separated the parts, we must remember that their apparent autonomy is only an expression of their participation in the whole, which alone is separate and

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[242] Friedrich Moritz Chalybäus, *Historische Entwickelung der speculativen Philosophie von Kant bis Hegel. Zu näherer Verständigung des wissenschaftlichen Publicums mit der neuesten Schule dargestellt* (Dresden: Arnoldi, 1848), 310.

[243] Hegel, *Difference*, 89. See also Beiser, *Hegel*, 155ff.

[244] Beiser, *Hegel*, 161–162.

[245] Ibid., 163–165.

[246] Ibid., 163.

unconditioned.[248] But, by virtue of their relationship with the whole, the parts lend

themselves to analysis and division, therefore, we can't be bogged down by the

contradictions, rather, they lead us back to the unity of the whole.[249]

So here at what seemed to be the culmination of all the hopes that launched the

enlightenment, the concept of system enjoys its most ambitious application. With Hegel,

system becomes more than merely the form of the presentation of knowledge or the

method that best accomplishes this, but that God and reality itself are the System and

everything, material and non-material, on both sides of every apparent contradiction,

past, present, and future, is united both through its own self-systematizing and through

our participation as the stewards of science.

But whether one is speaking of system, dialectic, whole, parts, or articulation, it is

all the same because it is all within the subjectivity of the whole—the absolute Spirit.

Therefore Hegel swings to the opposite extreme of Kant by arguing that, instead of

system being something that individual subjects impose on their knowledge, all

knowledge is the Absolute Subject finding itself through science.

But after Hegel, being the zenith of the reign of system in philosophy, the

popularity of this concept begins to wane and it never enjoyed as large a role in the

philosophers to come. In fact, almost immediately after Hegel there is an anti-system

backlash in the work of Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nitzsche, and others, which is

discussed below. Positive discussion, however, on the meaning of system or its

methodological application in theology and philosophy all but disappears within

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[247] Ibid.

[248] Ibid., 163–165.

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decades.[250] In fact, other than Ritschl's historical survey (1906), Rescher's introduction

to his cognitive theory (1979), and Siegwart's introduction to Lambert's *Systematology*

(1988), there have been only brief echoes of the definitions already given, and some new

applications of the concept in math (set theory) and in science (systems theory, cognitive

science, mereology).[251] But there is little, if any, expansion on the definition of this term

after the works of Kant and Hegel.

Detractors from System

Barclay (1648-1690) and Condillac (1715-1780)

The first significant reaction to system came even before the end of the

seventeenth century with Robert Barclay and Pietism.[252] This criticism, however, did

little to discourage the trend as can be seen by the subsequent history. The next wave of

criticism came from the French and especially from Étienne Bonnot de Condillac in his

Traité des systèmes (1749). In this work, he traces what he calls the genealogy of error

with certain types of systems being at the source.[253]

To Condillac, there are three basic types of systems: the abstract, hypothetical,

and "true." The first is the culprit while the second is ambiguous at best, and the third is

good. His problem with abstract systems is that they hinge on "abstract principles" that

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[249] Ibid.

[250] Ritschl, *System*, 89.

[251] See Lambert, *Texte*, lxxff.; Rescher, *Cognitive Systematization*, 1ff.; and Ivor
Grattan-Guinness, *In Search of Mathematical Roots* (Princeton: Princeton University
Press, 2000).

[252] Ritschl, *System*, 53.

[253] Hays, *Reading*, 118ff.

are ordinarily "of so little use that it is rather pointless to know them."[254] And

consequently, if the 'principles', 'foundation', or 'givens' of the system are faulty, then

the whole system is "groundless" and to him it seems that these types of systems "appear

to have arisen, after a fashion, all by themselves."[255]

Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

The next reaction came from Friedrich Schleiermacher, who was a contemporary

of Hegel but did not share his enthusiasm for system.[256] In *On Religion: Speeches to Its*

Cultured Despisers, Schleiermacher argues that system is not compatible with what he

considers "the hinge of my whole speech"—the "intuition of the universe" which is "the

essence of religion."[257] In his view, this incompatibility is due to the fact that the objects

of intuition resist the process of constructing a system.[258]

You can see, however, that he does not deny system a place in thought, only that

it is limited to the realm of abstract thought. Further on, Schleiermacher explains that

what is counterproductive about the "mania for system" is that it "does indeed reject what

is foreign, even if it is quite conceivable and true, because it could spoil one's own well-

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[254] Ibid., 120.

[255] Ibid., 121–122.

[256] It is interesting that there is so little work on the relationship between Hegel and Schleiermacher. Though in their formative periods there was almost no direct interaction, they had many of the same mentors, shared several friends, and their careers and publications were almost parallel in timing though radically different in outlook. See, Richard Crouter, "Introduction," in Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. Richard Crouter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xxiv.

[257] Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 18–25.

[258] Ibid., 26.

formed ranks and disturb the beautiful connections by claiming its place."[259] And if this sarcasm didn't persuade us, he continues with some Classical Ontology: "In this mania [for system] lies the seat of contradiction; it must quarrel and persecute; for to the extent that the particular is again related to something individual and finite, the one can indeed destroy the other through its existence. But in the infinite every thing finite stands undisturbed alongside one another; all is one, and all is true."[260]

Thus, what is wrong with system is the same thing we see Hegel struggling with in the problem of negativity and contradiction. Hegel believed he solved this through his principle of the absolute, enabling us to finally complete the system. But Schleiermacher seems to suggest here that the solution is not a new principle to unite the system, but to resist the urge altogether.[261] So, while allowing a level of significance for system in philosophy and theology, Schleiermacher denies it the privilege of a methodological priority.

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[259] Ibid., 28.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Later in his career, Schleiermacher in his *Dialektik* seems to actually encourage the use of system in "the sciences," which he considers contributing to religion: "Over the system of coordinated sciences there must be certain principles they share, an *architectonic* for these principles. However much one is to expect unity in all these principles, unity is just as little available nonetheless, and the diversity among these principles extends its influence over all the other sciences. . . . Thus, we are involved in forming a vital perspective on the deity to the extent that we work on the completion of the *real sciences*. This happens, however, not when a detail is added to other details merely as an aggregate but only through systematic treatment in which the totality of all is at least striven for" (Schleiermacher, *Dialectic or The Art of Doing Philosophy*, trans. Terrence N. Tice [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996], 38). It is also interesting to note the familiarity with which he uses the terminology and definitions of Wolff, Lambert, and Kant. But again, he seems to be either ignorant or greatly unimpressed with Hegel's contributions.

Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

Probably the most influential criticism was fueled by a reaction to Hegel's system

in particular but implied to system in general. Of course the best-known spokesmen of

this critique is Søren Kierkegaard in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the*

"Philosophical Fragments," written under the pseudonym Johannes Climacus in 1846.[262]

In this short work, Kierkegaard levels an explicit attack on systems of philosophy and

especially Hegel's.[263]

Thus Kierkegaard's first complaint is the constant state of being 'under

construction' in which we find the system. To him this is a devastating reality that

negates any promises system has to offer. "System and closure are pretty much one and

the same, so that if the system is not completed there is no system. I have already pointed

out in another place that a system which is not quite completed is a hypothesis, while a

half-finished system is nonsense."[264] But, in spite of his tongue-in-cheek proclamation

that he will be the first to worship the completed system, Kierkegaard argues that it is

futile to pursue the system's completion precisely because, for an "existing spirit," it is an

impossibility.[265]

But, does this mean that Kierkegaard is saying there is no system? "Not at all, nor

does what was said imply that."[266] Rather, Kierkegaard affirms that system is possible,

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[262] Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Crumbs*, ed. Alistair Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[263] Ibid., 90ff.

[264] Ibid., 91.

[265] "There can be no system for life itself. . . . Life itself is a system—for God, but cannot be that for any existing spirit" (Kierkegaard, *Concluding*, 100).

[266] Ibid., 100.

but it can be appreciated only from one perspective: the *systematic thinker*. And who is this systematic thinker? "It is someone who is outside life and yet inside it, who in his eternity is forever finalized and yet envelops life within himself—it is God."[267] Thus, as Kierkegaard already asserted, "Life [existence] itself is a system—for God."[268]

So, does that mean we should not seek the system? Again, Kierkegaard says no. As long as we are not "absent-minded" of our limitations as human-existing individuals, we must with Lessing redouble our persistent "striving," for it is "surely not a striving for nothing!"[269] "Someone existing who turns all his attention on the circumstance that he is existing, he too will smile approvingly as a beautiful saying at those words of Lessing about a constant striving."[270]

Of course, this logical critique of system and Hegel should be understood in a larger ethical critique of Kierkegaard's milieu. Kierkegaard's generation was fed up with the "mediocrity and bourgeois complacence of a pseudoreligious pseudomoral [*sic*] society" which was not showing any improvement from the optimistic achievements of the enlightenment, rationalism, German idealism, all of which, in Kierkegaard's mind, Hegel was the culmination.[271] Thus, even if the system enthusiasts were able to complete

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[267] Ibid., 101.

[268] Ibid., 100.

[269] Ibid., 91–92.

[270] Ibid., 102–103. Here it should be pointed out that Kierkegaard is presupposing a limitation or condition that should be included in any definition of system, that of *completeness*. At what point in the construction of a system is it a system? Kierkegaard is arguing that at no time while the system is 'in the process' of coming to be is it a system. This sets the stage for the distinction that comes later between *closed* and *open* systems, which will be discussed further below.

[271] Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought*, trans. David D. Green (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 110ff.

the theoretical half of Kant's commission, the other half, that is, the practical/ethical half, would remain wanting, making whatever passed for the 'completed' system a failure.[272]

At this point it should be noted that Kierkegaard's critique, taken up later by Barth, has never quite been resolved, either before or since. First, the idea, already identified by Malebranche and others, that a system cannot be constructed or perceived from any perspective but the transcendent, seems to be a persistent condition in any understanding of this concept. Second, we are confronted by the condition of what Kierkegaard called "finality" and Kant identified as the "the end and the form of the whole" which is contained within the principle of articulation. That is, in this second condition, there is required within every system some prophetic expectation of the completed whole which can only be fulfilled in its completion or perfection.[273] Therefore, these two qualifications to the idea of system are addressed more fully in the section on definition below.

See also, Robert C. Solomon, *From Rationalism to Existentialism: The Existentialists and Their Nineteenth-Century Backgrounds* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 77ff.

[272] Kierkegaard, *Concluding*, 103.

[273] And, though the terminology came later, these critiques imply the idea of closed vs. open systems, which were being discussed in theology at least as early as 1913: "The assertion that science is continuously learning, but that theology has learned, reveals not so much a distinction between science and theology as a mental state in which the attention of the thinker is focused on the static, superficial phenomena of theology. That is to say, it reveals a static thinker whose mind moves within a closed system of thought. It is not a fact that theology is a closed system of thought, any more than science is a closed system of thought. Both are open and growing, because both are modes of living human spirits" (Editorial, *Homiletic Review: An International Magazine of Religion* 66 [1913]: 2).

Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Friedrich Nietzsche was even less subtle and attacked the very character of philosophers who pursue systems: "The will to a system, in a philosopher, morally speaking, is a subtle corruption, a disease of character. Amorally speaking, his will [is] to appear more stupid than he is. . . . I am not bigoted enough for a system, not even for my system."[274] Actually, with the several other 'anti-system' statements by Nietzsche, this illustrates that his attitude is not so much about what is wrong with system as much as how the penchant for it betrays a faulty character.[275] And from this critique, Nietzsche signals a shift in philosophy from the idealistic, systematic, whole-oriented approach to a more atomistic approach which focuses more on individual problems and theses and has little patience for the macro.[276] This is not to say that Nietzsche's critique of philosophy in general could not be gleaned for a more substantial critique of system in particular, rather it is simply that he was not impressed enough by the idea to attack it head-on with substantive recommendations. And to be sure, system in philosophy has had little popularity ever since.

Summary of the Usage of the Term "System" Since Keckermann

The purpose of this section is to explore the historical and etymological development of the term "system," as it is used in theology and philosophy. This survey begins with the introduction of this term into the technical vocabulary of theology and philosophy in the first part of the seventeenth century. Then, the most significant of the

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[274] Solomon, *From Rationalism*, 108.

[275] Löwith, *From Hegel*, 112.

subsequent innovations and contributions to its meaning in this context are highlighted

through to its most mature expressions in the nineteenth century and beyond.

Accordingly, from this survey covering more than three centuries of the most fruitful

consideration of the meaning of this term, there should be a significant context for a

useful definition, which is the objective of the following section.

Before attempting a definition, however, it should be helpful to highlight the main

emphases of the discussions of system in the foregoing material. With the introduction of

the term in Keckermann, the dual aspects of *system as process* and *system as structure*

were established as pervasive characteristics of this idea. Furthermore, Keckermann also

secures the Aristotelian undergirding of system whether or not it is acknowledged. Then,

though they didn't expand the definition much, Keckermann's contemporaries further

clarified both the *system as process* (Timpler's tangible vs. intangible ends) and the

system as structure (Alsted's subjective vs. objective perspectives of system).

The next significant contribution came with Malebranche who expanded the

system as structure aspect to include the possibility of active vs. passive knowledge of

systems. By implication, he also expanded the *system as process* aspect by linking the

quality of one's systematic knowledge with their progress toward union with the Mind of

God. Following this, Leibniz expanded the *system as structure* aspect, and more

specifically the element of the parts, in that they too can play either an active or passive

role in their arrangement and conjunction. And both of these perspectives, along with

Wolff's metaphor of the surgeon, set the stage for the recurring recognition of the

condition of transcendence in systems.

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[276] Solomon, *From Rationalism*, 109.

Then, equipped with the comprehensive vocabulary of systems supplied by Lambert, Kant summed up the essential elements and honest limitations involved in the meaning and function of system in the human pursuit of knowledge. As such, he paved the way for human reason to make a realistic attempt at understanding the system of all knowledge, which Hegel took rather seriously. And in his colossal proposition regarding this endeavor, Hegel applied this term in its most ambitious expression, the System, in which all is one: structure and process, subject and object, systematist and system, active and passive, tangible and intangible, whole, parts, organizing principles, etc.

Finally, in the critiques that followed, the more controversial aspects of this phenomena, that is, the conditions of transcendence and finality were revisited as the most convincing arguments against the possibility of either building or perceiving systems with any reasonable benefit. And consequently, all that remains is a summary or synthesis of these main contributions to the meaning of this term for the purposes of a useful definition.

In general terms, there are the basic elements that should be included in anything called a system (whole, parts, etc.) and its dual aspects as *structure* and *process*. More specifically, though controversial, is the conditional elements of *transcendence* and *finality*. Thus, these points, along with other relevant attributes mined from the foregoing survey, should provide the basis for the following section involving the definition and discussion of the various elements and conditions required.

Intensional Definition of "System" in Theology

An intensional definition "specifies the essential properties [here called "elements"] of the object denoted by the term" [277] and this is the treatment applied here to clarify the meaning of the term "system" as it is used in the foregoing material. Notice, this approach to definition is based on how a word is being defined either explicitly or by usage. This is in contradistinction with a normative definition that should apply to any usage. In other words, the purpose of this study is not to say how the term "system" should be defined, but what people usually mean when they use this word, especially in theology.

Therefore, in this section I will be discussing the most basic elements that are common to the usages and definitions of the term "system" in its most popular phase in the history of theology and philosophy discussed earlier in this chapter. But, before looking at the individual elements, I will begin with a concise statement of definition of this word in its most general sense: "A System is a whole of articulated parts."

This sentence can also be expressed in the formula: "$x = y$ where x is any system and y is a 'whole of articulated parts.'" The second part (y) of the sentence consists of three elements: two nouns ('whole' and 'parts') and one adjective ('articulated'), which modifies the noun, 'parts.' Of course, this definition is rather general and coincides with almost any usage of system in any context.

Therefore, since this study is focused on this term as it is used in theology, my definition can be narrowed further. Based on the usages and definitions of the foregoing material, there are two main types of systems in the theological context, cognitive

(systems of theology, philosophy, ethics, etc.) and ontological (physical/structural systems in space and temporal/process systems) theological systems.[278] Therefore, as it is used in theology, system can be defined as either "a cognitive whole of articulated theological doctrines," or "an ontological whole of theologically significant parts articulated in time and space." And from these two more specific definitions, it should be possible to deduce the basic elements implied by any usage of the term "system" in theology.

Before discussing these elements separately, however, it might be noticed that this formula differs somewhat from the lists and categories found in Lambert's *Systematology*. In his first category concerning the elements of system ("in a system is found:") Lambert did not include the 'whole' and he added two other elements ("one common thread" and "a single common purpose"), which I am not including.[279] That he does not include 'whole' in his list of elements should not be surprising in light of the fact that he stresses that not every whole is a system.[280] Thus, to him, 'wholeness' is not a unique characteristic of system but instead he includes his bits about a common thread and single purpose, which nevertheless implies unity and wholeness.

For my purposes here, I prefer the term 'whole' to 'common thread' or 'single purpose,' because these are implied by the element of articulation ("joining powers" in Lambert), whereas articulated parts do not necessarily form a whole. Furthermore, the

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[277] Rudolf P. Botha, *The Conduct of Linguistic Inquiry: A Systematic Introduction to the Methodology of Generative Grammar* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1981), 157.

[278] The two types of systems will be discussed further below as we look at the individual elements of system.

[279] Lambert, *Texte*, 127.

[280] Ibid., 125.

idea of a 'common thread' or 'single purpose,' though present in some of the discourse about system, is not as prevalent as the idea of the 'whole.' Also, Lambert uses "joining powers," a noun, while I prefer 'articulated,' as this latter term is more general and can encompass much of what has been said about system, while Lambert is the only one to use the former.

Finally, in support of reducing Lambert's more complex formula to these three terms, I appeal to the simplicity of Kant's formula for system: "If we place these principles of systematic unity in the order appropriate to their empirical employment, they will stand thus: manifoldness [parts], affinity [articulation], unity [whole], each being taken, as an idea, in the highest degree of its completeness."[281] Therefore, we can now look at each of the three elements of the definition: whole, parts, and articulation. [282]

Whole

One of the recurring sentiments concerning system is the idea of a whole in contrast to the ideas of a "pile," "heap," "collection," "aggregate," etc.[283] Of course this distinction goes back at least to Aristotle: "With respect both to definitions and to numbers, what is the cause of their unity? In the case of all things which have several parts and in which the totality is not, as it were, a mere heap, but the whole is something

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[281] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 371.

[282] These elements could probably be discussed in any order. I have chosen to begin with 'whole' because from the material above it seems as though the contributor's definition of this element is what distinguishes a 'systematic whole' from an 'aggregate,' which might include the other elements.

[283] Probably the first to make this distinction in the context of system would be Alsted: "συστημα is like a structure (*compages*), not haphazard, but methodical: not just a pile, but also an arrangement (*non quaelibet, sed methodica: non solum congesta, sed etiam digesta*)" (Ritschl, *System*, 37).

beside the parts."[284] In an aggregate there are parts and these parts can be related or joined to some degree or another by proximity (heap, pile, etc.) and/or by an agent, which gathers or collects them (list, collection, etc.).[285] However, according to the system theorists surveyed above, things listed, piled, heaped, or collected together do not necessarily make a whole, and thus not a system.[286] But this then leads us to the question, 'What makes these parts a whole and not a pile?'

Alsted argued that the difference is in how the parts are gathered or collected, that is, that they are done so as an "arrangment" (*digesta*), "methodically" (*methodica*) vs. a "pile" (*congesta*), "haphazardly" (*quaelibet*).[287] Later, Kant implies that what makes the difference is that the parts share a relationship with a single ordering principle.[288] Finally, if we go all the way back to Aristotle, we are told that the difference is that among the elements in a proper whole, the form of a substance is included, and this form

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[284] "*περὶ δὲ τῆς ἀπορίας τῆς εἰρημένης περί τε τοὺς ὁρισμοὺς καὶ περὶ τοὺς ἀριθμούς, τί αἴτιον τοῦ ἓν εἶναι; πάντων γὰρ ὅσα πλείω μέρη ἔχει καὶ μὴ ἔστιν οἷον σωρὸς τὸ πᾶν ἀλλ᾽ ἔστι τι τὸ ὅλον παρὰ τὰ μόρια*" (Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1045a 9–10).

[285] Again, Aristotle is helpful. In a recent commentary on Aristotle's explanation of substances as wholes in *Metaphysics* (1041b 14–33), where he uses the syllable as an example: "Substance, then, is the cause of the whole being something other than its elements. Substance is responsible for the unity of the elements being the unity of a whole and not the unity of a heap or what we might call a 'collection' (for 'b' and 'a' composing 'ba' and not {'b', 'a'})" (Deborah Achtenberg, *Cognition of Value in Aristotle's Ethics: Promise of Enrichment, Threat of Destruction* [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002], 146).

[286] Kant's assertion on this point should be recalled: "By the term *Architectoic* I mean the art of constructing a system. Without systematic unity, our knowledge cannot become science; it will be an aggregate, and not a system" (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 466).

[287] Ritschl, *System*, 37.

[288] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 361.

causes the elements in question to be a unity as a whole.[289] The problem with these

explanations, however, is that they further beg the question. What is the difference

between a "methodical" and a "haphazard" collection, how do we know whether a

plurality shares a principle, and what in the world is a substance and how can we tell the

difference?[290]

Among the system theorists surveyed above, possibly the closest any of them

come to assisting us in understanding the difference between a whole and any other

plurality is in Kant's struggle to identify the organizing principle in the objective system

of "nature," being our "feeling" of beauty by which we sense order in the world and that

specifically being an emotional intuition of "purposiveness."[291] This is also in line with

Kant's mentor, Lambert, who argued that the parts of a proper system "consisted" of,

among other things, a "common purpose."[292] Without evaluating the persuasiveness of

this argument, it represents another possible solution to the puzzle in distinguishing

between wholes and other pluralities, and as such, should be discussed further.

To begin with, at risk of oversimplification, take a pile of bricks at a building site.

At the beginning of the building process these are simply a pile. They are related by

proximity in that they have been 'piled' (gathered, collected, etc.) together to be used by

the masons in the construction of the house. They are also related by the fact that they

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[289] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1041b 14ff.

[290] Though Aristotle provides many answers to his question, "What is a substance?" these answers are neither simple nor definitive as he himself calls this a "puzzle" (*Metaphysics* 1028b 2–3). See also, Achtenberg, *Cognition*, 146; and Mary Louise Gill, *Aristotle on Substance: The Paradox of Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 3ff.

[291] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 99.

[292] Lambert, *Texte*, 127.

are all made of the same material and are all in a relatively similar shape. After the house is completed, the bricks from the pile that were used are then parts of a whole. Before they are incorporated, however, they are only a pile. The difference lies squarely in their as-yet-not-realized role as essential elements in the structure of the completed house.

Interestingly, this also provides a link between the two aspects of system, system as structure and system as process. Here it can be shown that at any given time during the construction of the house, both aspects are relevant. At the beginning, the process aspect is indicated by the "beginning" and the parts may not even be 'piled' yet. When we add the structure aspect, however, though invisible to everyone else, this aspect exists in the blueprints, plans, or imagination of the builder and includes 'lists' of the parts that will be used to complete the building. In the middle of the process, when only a portion of the building is completed, some of the parts have already been incorporated into the partial structure, while others still lay in piles around the site, if present at all. They are all one, however, in the plans and/or mind of the builder. Therefore, based on the expected end of the process in the completed structure, at any stage of the process all is one, a whole.

At this point, one cannot help seeing the echoes of Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes and his ideas of act vs. potency. Interestingly, however, the connection is never made among the system theorists above. It will have to be sufficient for us here to establish that the closest any of the above discussions has come to defining a whole is that it is a plurality that is united by a single method, principle, end, or purpose.

These ideas too, however, can be problematic in that an objectively given whole does not necessarily have to yield any functional or teleological knowledge of its

intended purpose(s) or ordering principles to inspire the impression of it being a whole.

In Natural systems for instance, it would be arrogant of us to assume that human life were

the ultimate teleological effect to be realized by the numberless entities and subsystems

involved in our galaxy. Yet it would be extremely difficult to think of our solar system as

anything less than a whole even if that whole is a part in a larger whole. And of course in

aesthetic systems such as works of art, there are often no effects (other than a sense of

beauty or completeness) consciously intended by the artist, but the result is a multitude of

them.

Even in mechanical systems, if in a future archeological excavation of my home

someone were to find the broken carburetor used to hold my door open, it could be

misleading if informative at all. Even if they were able to deduce its originally intended

mechanical purpose, its new purpose as a doorstop could not be deduced by any aspect of

its original complex design other than the fact that it is heavy but not unreasonably large.

And this leads to the other problem with a whole being defined by its purpose.

Many wholes' purpose or usefulness is manifold (no pun intended):

> The pluralism of desiderata—the fact that each must be taken in context of others
> within the overall picture of systematicity—means that in the pursuit of these factors
> we must moderate them to one another. Whenever multiple desiderata interact, we
> cannot appropriately pursue one without reference to the rest.
> Consider an analogy. Its "safety" is a prime desideratum in a motor car. But it
> would not do to devise a "perfectly safe" car, which only goes 1.75 m.p.h. Safety,
> speed, efficiency, operating-economy, breakdown avoidance, etc., are *all* prime
> desiderata of a motor car.[293]

And is it not also true that, frequently, additional "desiderata" or purposes are discovered

consequent to original determinations such as the superior usefulness of a Holley four-

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[293] Rescher, *Cognitive Systematization*, 17.

barrel carburetor as a doorstop to its original intended purpose having been superseded by the incomprehensible fuel-injection system my car is making use of today.

In spite of the few explanations provided, and in light of the objections immediately foregoing, a precise objective distinction between wholes and other pluralities would be presumptuous at this point.[294] For my purposes here, however, it should be possible to provide at least a vague description of the subjective experience of this distinction. Kant especially insists that one's experience of external systems is the result of an internal expectation. In other words, 'you found a system because you were looking for it.' This is much like the common navigational axioms like "you'll know it when you get there" or "you can't miss it." As unscientific as it may sound, one gets the impression that 'you'll know a whole when you see one.' Put in another way, we recognize a whole because it fulfills an expectation of "wholeness." Therefore, "a whole is something that satisfies an expectation."

Schleiermacher called this expectation 'an intuition', and as such, it unravels the scientific ambitions of system thought and relegates any interaction with wholes to religion.[295] Kant, on the other hand, considers this expectation a proper function of cognition, in the process of "aesthetic judgment" as the mind's compulsion to seek systematic unity in its knowledge.[296] Rescher echoes this, saying that "the intellect proceeds standardly [*sic*] with reference to such essentially 'aesthetic' principles of . . . a

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[294] The potential for more precision and definitive conclusions cannot be denied if this question were approached by itself. In this study, however, I am limited by the context of the discourse within my focus.

[295] Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 25.

[296] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 99.

very *classical* sort."[297] Thus, I could possibly expand the statement above, saying that "a whole is something that satisfies an aesthetic expectation." And in the context of this vague, but solid definition, we can look at the different types of wholes one might expect in theological systems and the systems referred to in theological discourse.

Having distinguished wholes from other pluralities, I can now further classify wholes by the distinction made above concerning cognitive theological systems and ontological theological systems. Cognitive systems seek to fulfill the expectations involved in acquiring or augmenting knowledge by presenting wholes such as a unified body of theological doctrines, ideas, theories, etc. Ontological systems, on the other hand, fulfill the expectations provoked by sense experience of reality. Additionally, in light of the dual aspects of system as structure and system as process, a whole can be understood as the fulfillment of expectations of a particular structure or expectations of a particular end to be achieved through a cognitive process.

Finally, even if one is tempted to consider the diversity of these distinctions to be too great to be of any use, before we all give it up and become Nietzscheans, consider the advantage to leaving the definition of wholes as simply 'what meets an expectation.' By defining them such, each system can be compared by the specific expectation its whole attempts to fulfill, which should allow for the diversity that undoubtedly characterizes the many theological systems throughout history. And as such, this expectation should provide useful material for analysis, comparison, and contrast, especially when combined with analysis of the other elements in system, the parts and articulation.

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[297] Rescher, *Cognitive Systematization*, 16; Gadamer, *Truth*, 54–55; Matthews, *Significance*, 1. It should also be remembered that Keckermann, whether by mistake or by design, applies Aristotle's attributes of beauty to the idea of a whole (see note 86).

Parts

Lambert asserts that "any entity that can be called truly *simple*, is not a system.
. . . A system will therefore have parts."[298] Kant refers to this as the systematic principle
of "manifoldness," and Leibniz declares that "where there is no variety, there is no
harmony."[299] So, the necessity of a plurality of parts in a system seems to be a point of
general consensus. Once this plurality of components is established, an understanding of
the nature and role of the parts in a system is helpful for analysis, comparison, and
contrast.

In terms of nature, in cognitive theological systems, the parts are theological
doctrines, ideas, or theories, while in ontological systems the parts can be physical bodies
or events in space and time. Parts in either case can be the most simple, such as a quark
in an atom or an unchallenged theological given such as 'God exists' in a theology
textbook. There can also be extremely complex parts such as a central nervous system or
a doctrine of reconciliation, in which case these parts are actually 'wholes-within-wholes'
or 'sub-systems'.

In terms of the roles of the parts, as they relate to other parts and/or the whole,
they can have differing degrees of dependence.   Parts can be crucially dependent on
other parts such as the heart and lungs of the human organism, but the same parts can also
be dependent on the whole in that, even together, without the rest of the organism they
will cease to function. Independent parts can be removed from a whole and its other
parts and function on their own, such as bacteria in an organism. Of course there are

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[298] Lambert, *Texte*, 126.

[299] Rutherford, *Leibniz*, 31.

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parts that are dependent upon the whole, while the whole can exist without these parts, such as an arm, leg, eye, etc. But this raises more questions such as whether it is the same whole after these parts are removed or whether any part or whole can exist without a larger context. But, however intriguing these questions are, they are beyond the scope of this section and will have to be passed over while we continue to other aspects of this element of system.

In addition to complexity and dependence, as Alsted suggested, the parts can have either an active or passive role in their relationship with each other or with the whole.[300] An active part is one that will either seek out its own connections with other parts or one that is self-determinative of its connections, in that it can only be joined to one or a few specific other parts. A passive part is one that can be connected to any other part according to the priorities of articulation. Obviously, the distinctions here can affect profound differences between their mature systematic expressions, but these distinctions are contingent on our understanding of articulation, which is the third and final element to discuss.

<center>Articulation</center>

In contrast to the element of the parts, the articulation of a system is seldom explicit. Much like the nails in a house, what arranges and holds the parts of a system together is not usually visible on the surface. Also, this aspect enjoys the least amount of explanation in the theological discourse concerning system.

For the most part, in referring to articulation, those who attempt to discuss the meaning of "system" frequently use metaphor or allusions in lieu of explanation. For

instance, Keckermann uses the familiar analogy of the construction of a house but with a different designation than given above. To him, the aspect of articulation is represented by the builder's "pre-knowledge" of the finished product, that is, the blueprint.[301] On the other hand, Leibniz attributes articulation to the parts themselves based in their individual possession of the God-given, "pre-established" harmony.[302] And then there's Kant's principle of "affinity" which is not an internal principle found in the parts themselves as it suggests, but is the affinity of the parts to the idea under which they are all united to each other and to the whole.[303] Finally, the most extensive explanation of this aspect is again in Lambert's *Systematology* in his discussion on "joining powers."[304]

In cognitive systems, probably the most popular approach follows Kant's explanation where the articulation is believed to be reducible to a single idea or concept found within the system in question.[305] This is often referred to as the central theme or

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[300] This implies *articulation*, which is discussed below.

[301] Keckermann, *Systema logicae*, 590. This metaphor is also related to Kant's use of the term "architectonic."

[302] Leibniz, *Opera omnia*, 49.

[303] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 361.

[304] Lambert, *Texte*, 132.

[305] "We understand by 'system' the totality of an intellectual structure which is based upon a fundamental concept (a 'principle') and which develops it logically and methodically. The presupposition is, accordingly, that the 'principle' contains potentially the one and total content, which is then explained in greater detail in the systematic exposition. This means in turn that in its expositions the system cannot contain elements which are not already given in the 'principle.' The 'principle' is, therefore, the intellectual condensation of an all-embracing totality" (Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics*, 1:51); "This faith which is directed toward only one center has the character of an organic whole. The object of systematic theology is a most sensitive organism, in which one aspect stands in intimate relation to the other, and what happens on the periphery is reflected at once at the very center" (Gustaf Aalen, *Faith of the Christian Church* [London: SCM Press 1960], 7); "Every methodic project rests on an 'idea.' The idea not only starts and propels the movement; it imparts direction, and therefore

motif, organizing principle, common thread, linchpin, cornerstone, keystone, etc. And

when these reductions are used in analysis or critique they become powerful arguments

both positive and negative. For instance, an admirer can promote a particular system's

demonstrable invincibility because of the discovery of this remarkable "cornerstone." On

the other hand, a critic can prophesy the eminent failure of the same system by exposing

the precarious dependence of the whole structure upon that crucial Jenga-piece-like-

linchpin, which, when tested, brings the whole edifice toppling. [306]

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introduces progression into the pattern that is to be wrought. By virtue of the fact that it is a 'key note' of 'the harmony' to follow, it ensures unity, in the form of a principle by which things may be connected and united" (Justus Buchler, *The Concept of Method* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1961], 39); "All too often theology is understood as a Roman numeral order of study, an outline designated by I, II, III, as if we had a bundle of independent axioms not organically interrelated but only mechanically succeeding one another. This is not so. Theology *is* logical, it is cohesive, its parts fit together. The proper imagery is not that of a Roman numeral I, II, III order of study but rather that of a spoked wheel. There is a hub, a starting point, a given center, from which all the spokes extend and upon which they all depend. Ideas in theology are interdependent. They grow out of and depend on what has gone before, and they in turn produce other ideas" (James Kallas, *A Layman's Introduction to Christian Thought* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969], 19–20); "Each distinct science has some supreme principle to which its subordinate classifications are referred: it becomes a science only when it has seized its central idea. The whole course of the history of theology may be regarded as a series of attempts to obtain such a principle. . . . No system can stand in a just relation to historical theology unless it combines the logical and historical methods in subserviency to some one overmastering idea, which shall give unity to these methods and to the system itself" (Henry B. Smith, *Faith and Philosophy* [New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1877], 128–137); "Science is not only the observing, recoding, verifying, and formulating of objective facts; it is also the recognition and explication of the relations between these facts, and the synthesis of both the facts and the rational principle which unite them in a comprehensive, rightly proportioned, and organic system" (Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology* [Philadelphia: Judson, 1907], 2).

[306] For example, "Freedom of the Will and the Doctrine of Original Sin attacked what [Jonathan] Edwards perceived to be the linchpin doctrines of the new movements in eighteenth-century thought; that is, the idea of self-determining free (or autonomous) will (or a liberty of indifference) and the idea that human beings were perfectible with their own innate powers" (Patrick W. Carey and Joseph T. Lienhard, "Edwards, Jonathan," in *Bibliographical Dictionary of Christian Theologians* [Westport, CT: Westport

This tendency is unfortunate for, though the phenomenon of articulation is central, integral, and can make or break the system, this aspect can rarely be contained in a single, simple idea or concept. In most systems, the aspect of articulation is significantly complex and often involves several or many ideas borrowed from several sources or even other systems. Even if a theologian specifies a single idea as the principle of articulation in his or her system, that idea is mediated through that individual's subjectivity, background, influences, culture, etc. Thus, this emphasis on an organizing principle is often just a distraction or bottleneck filtering and concealing the complexity that is the true reality of articulation, in other words, "don't pay any attention to the man behind the curtain." Having said all this, however, the element of articulation in any cognitive system is still the key to understanding the whole and its principle(s) and should be pursued no matter how illusive.

In ontological systems the articulation can be even more obtuse, in spite of the fact that theology seems to have a lot to say about it. In ontological systems involved in theological discourse, the "theological" element leads the discussion of articulation back to God, creation, being, redemption, Jesus, the cross, etc. In other words, no matter how mysterious the connections of things in history and the universe, the eternal given of theology is that the man behind the curtain has a name, "God." But, as in cognitive systems, some theologians are helpful enough to explore the 'principles' through which God articulates our world.[307]

Publishers, 2000], 174. Also see, Richard Grigg, "The Experiential Center of Tillich's System," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53 (1985): 251–258.

[307] This is especially true in Aquinas, as seen in the third chapter.

In all cases, however, the complexity of articulation does not always have to elude analysis. In analyzing ontological systems, philosophy and science have made great strides in narrowing our understanding of the principles of unity in history and the universe. And, in cognitive systems, even if the source manages to produce a perfectly chaotic 'heap', the articulation can be traced at least back to the personality of its author (Nietzsche, for instance). Theological heaps, however, are not what this study is concerned with. Rather it is structures and processes in theological discourse that can be properly called 'systems' which are the focus here. And, as a system, its principle(s) of articulation should be accessible for productive analysis.

Finally, before moving on, there are at least two levels in any system where articulation takes place: internal structure and external presentation. The level of presentation is the somewhat superficial form or order with which a system is presented. The articulation at this level is characterized by the 'plan of the book', including organizational divisions such as outline, chapters, headings, subheadings, etc. This is usually the most visible type of articulation, but it is only a small part of a bigger picture in the articulation of a theological system.

The rest of that picture is the articulation at the deeper level of the internal structure. And it is at this deeper level that the articulation of a system has any serious bearing for analysis or comparison with others. But any system can be articulated at both levels, with different principles and different configurations at that. For instance, a book on systematic theology might present the doctrine of the foreknowledge of God as a sub-heading under the main heading, 'Doctrine of God.' At the level of the internal structure, however, this idea might be a logical implication of the theologian's Anthropology,

which includes a doctrine of the soul and predestination. Obviously, it is the role that the doctrine in question plays at the deeper level that is the most helpful for analysis or comparison. Thus, any responsible discussion of a system should be able to distinguish between these two levels and direct the force of analysis towards the deeper, internal structure.

Summary

In this section we have looked specifically at the definition of system with explanation of its three main elements based on its etymological development and historical usages. From this working definition, it should be possible to progress toward the formulation of a manageable instrument for analysis and comparison of the myriad of explicit and implicit systems of theology from any background or period.

Recommended Instrument: Architectonic Analysis

What is here being called architectonic analysis is an analysis of anything called a "system," based on the intensional elements of the definition of the term "system"—whole, parts, and articulation—discussed above. And, due to the focus of this study, this analysis targets theological systems specifically. Furthermore, since, in theology, the ontological systems referred to are apprehended through their cognitive descriptions, this instrument should be applied primarily to the cognitive systems of theology, and secondarily on the ontological systems included therein (if at all). In so doing, within a particular theological system, one can extract information about the whole referred to by the system, the parts included (and excluded), and the articulation of those parts.

The main advantage of this type of analysis is to avoid contemporary versions of what would classically have been called 'category mistakes.' And yes, though in the postmodern world we have blurred the lines between genus and species, we still seek to avoid using oranges to make value judgments about apples. Therefore, with this instrument, we should be able to make more intelligent comparisons and contrasts between different theological systems without 'lumping' some together that don't belong or missing affinities between others, which though different in content or conclusions, are referring to the same 'whole.'

Specifically, this analysis should be able to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Systematicity:[308] Is the work in consideration a "cognitive theological system"?

2. Whole: What expectation is to be fulfilled by this system?

3. Parts: What are the nature and role(s) of the parts of this system?

4. Articulation: What is/are the principle(s) of articulation in the internal structure of this system?

Probably the best argument in support of this instrument is application, which is the purpose of the following two chapters where this instrument will be applied to the great examples of theology: Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* and Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. Before proceeding with that, however, it should be helpful to take a closer look at each of these questions briefly.

Systematicity: Is the Work in Consideration
a Cognitive Theological System?

Since the primary application of this instrument is the analysis of cognitive

theological systems, the first step is to determine whether the object of analysis is just

that, a cognitive theological system. Therefore, when looking at a theological expression,

it must be determined whether it is a viable object of architectonic analysis, regardless of

what it is titled by its author (system, summa, textbook, introduction, dogmatics, etc.). If

it fulfills the intensional definition of a cognitive theological system outlined above, then

we can continue with the analysis. If, on the other hand, it does not meet one of the

intensional criteria above (being a proper whole, having parts, those parts being

articulated), then this type of analysis would not apply and we should look for a more

appropriate object for this analysis.[309]

It is possible that an ontological system is implied within the cognitive structure

or process. But, as a theological expression, it is primarily a cognitive system. Hegel's

Phenomenology of Spirit is an obvious example of this, in that the extended system of all

of reality, time and space, God and creation, is the ambitious object of his cognitive

system. Of course, this could be over-applied in that any temporal process or physical

object referred to in a cognitive system could be included in this analysis. Therefore, any

[308] The term "systematicity" that is being used here should not be understood in
the sense of "systematic." Though it is related, it is being used here in the specific sense
of whether or not something can be called a "system."

[309] Again, this would be indifferent to what the work is titled. Also, this is based
on the intensional definition of system offered above of how the term is usually defined
or used, not a normative definition of what a system has to be.

ontological systems that should affect the analysis can be addressed secondarily

depending on their role(s) within the cognitive structure or process.

At this point, one might wonder whether this distinction even should be made or

that analysis should focus on either one or the other. Hopefully, once this terminology is

more precise, this should be the case. In the meantime, however, due to the ambiguity of

usages involving the term "system" in theology and philosophy, it is necessary to

highlight this distinction. And in this study at least, it seems necessary to address both

usages in that the overall purpose here is to clarify the meaning of this term as it is being

used in theological discourse.

In order to answer this question there are at least three steps beginning with the

most obvious, asking whether the author calls their work a system. And though calling a

work a system does not make it one, the author's claim is important. If their work does

not represent their claim, it can shed light on the very problem being addressed in this

study regarding the ambiguity of meaning in this term. Certainly any work put on paper

can be called a "whole of articulated parts" at least loosely. But if that work is only an

aggregate of theological or philosophical ideas "collected" by the author without any

significant internal articulation, it does not fulfill the intensional definition of a cognitive

theological system offered above and should be appropriately distinguished as such.

Concordantly, the reverse claim should be tested as well. For, if an author denies

that their work is a system but it fulfills the definition above, this highlights the

possibility that that author is relying on a definition that is narrower. Furthermore, when

either claim is made, there is always a possibility that along with the claim itself, the

author will provide clues to their own perspective on the meaning of the term "system"

evident in their attempt to construct or avoid constructing a system and thus guide the architectonic analysis of their work. Therefore, either way, the author's claim or lack thereof is of at least minor importance. And, related to this, in the next step it is important to look at secondary source claims. Again, these claims are not determinative, but can expose the ambiguities addressed here and provide clues for guiding the architectonic analysis.

Finally, and more determinative than the first two steps is how the other questions in the architectonic analysis are answered. Obviously, this implies a certain circularity in this analysis, but it cannot be avoided in that what makes a work a system is whether it is a whole of articulated parts. In order to answer the question of systematicity, primarily, however, it should be possible to look at the other questions in a brief, superficial way to get a preliminary idea of whether the work is in fact a system. Conversely, if the author and secondary sources make claims regarding the systematicity of the work in consideration, it makes the other questions all the more important in that they will confirm or invalidate such claims.[310]

Whole: What Expectation Is to Be Fulfilled by This System?

Based on the discussion of this element above, this question involves the nuanced relationship between authors and their readers. When presenting a cognitive system, the author has an intuition, however accurate, of what it will take to fulfill the reader's expectations. Then, the author attempts to hit that target. Hence, the minimum that is

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[310] In the following chapters, in the case studies provided, the results of this step will not be reproduced in conjunction with this question in that it will be demonstrated by the sections on the other questions.

required to fulfill the expectation intuited by the author is the whole of the system as presented. Of course, many successful theologians and authors may have their own expectations in mind in this process, but if that author's personal expectations happen to have enough in common with a critical mass of readers, their system will have great appeal.

More specifically, in the aspect of system as structure, in the grandest case, a theological system seeks to fulfill the expectation of a comprehensive treatment of 'all true Christian doctrines.' In a less ambitious project, an author might offer a more limited but comprehensive presentation of the doctrine of predestination only. In the other aspect of system as process, a system seeks to fulfill the expectation of leading its reader through a cognitive process of learning some spiritual skill or comprehending some theological concept. However, the extensiveness of the whole does not affect its validity as a whole, only its correlation with some definable expectation.

Furthermore, for the purposes of this type of analysis, even if the whole fails to completely fulfill expectations, it is still a whole as long as its expectation can be defined. In other words, an archer who can't hit the bull's-eye on his target is still called an 'archer,' even if a bad one. Thus, systems can be critiqued on their effectiveness in fulfilling the expectations of their wholes, but if these expectations are known, they are still systems with wholes.

Thus, the answer to this question might be something like, "The whole that is expected in this system is a comprehensive compendium of Christian doctrines." Another answer might be, "The whole that is expected by this system is a body of knowledge that leads to salvation." Therefore, having established that the work in

consideration is, in fact, a system, and, having identified the expectation(s) it seeks to fulfill, the third question concerning the *parts* can now be considered.

<p style="text-align: center">Parts: What Are the Nature and Role(s)
of the Parts of This System?</p>

The nature of the parts of a system refers simply to the components that are required and/or used to fulfill the expectation of the whole. Therefore, a 'complete system of theology' would be expected to include 'all' of the doctrines of Christian theology. Of course, there can be (and certainly is) disagreement about which doctrines to include and how to treat them, but what is important for this analysis is that even the theologians with the sharpest disagreement on this point are speaking of the same thing, that is, their idea of a 'complete system of theology.' What is important in terms of the nature of the parts is not whether we agree on the which or how of these doctrines, but that we agree that the parts of a system of theology are the Christian doctrines. If, on the other hand, a particular 'system of theology' includes some philosophical principles in addition to Christian doctrines, then this is significant for comparison with other 'systems of theology.'

In terms of the role(s) of the parts, this is where the which and how come into play. As noted in the previous section on the elements of the definition of "system," the role(s) of the parts within a cognitive system involves various degrees and directions of dependence. In cognitive theological systems–the focus of this architectonic analysis– this involves either logical dependence (as in system as structure) or sequential dependence (as in system as process).

Much like the clauses of a sentence, the parts included in a system can be either necessary or superfluous; dependent or independent. A necessary part is one without which the whole would be something other than what is expected. A superfluous part is one which, though it may add something to the whole (like an attribute), without it the whole fulfills the same expectation. Dependent parts are those which are only meaningful in their context in the system. Independent parts can be removed from the system and stand alone as wholes or systems of their own. These also can be transferred to other systems without injuring their meaning significantly.

Before moving on to the final question, however, it should be noted that within the aspect of the structure of the whole, there is another duality in terms of internal vs. external structure. The external structure is the concrete presentation of the system in its form as a book, article, etc. This is sometimes referred to as 'the plan of the book' and at this level, the parts relate to each other and the whole in terms of their place in the outline as summarized in a table of contents or index. The internal structure lies underneath or behind the actual presentation. And like the internal structures of extended wholes, how the parts in a cognitive whole relate at the internal level is of primary importance and should be distinguished from the plan of the book. This is not to say that the external structure is irrelevant, on the contrary, an index or table of contents can be helpful in guiding the analysis, but the internal structure is the primary focus here. This external/internal duality is also important to recognize in the element of articulation, which is the final question in the architectonic analysis.

Articulation: What Is/Are the Principle(s)
of Articulation in the Internal
Structure of This System?

The first step in answering this question is to isolate the deeper, internal structure

or process behind the external structure of the presentation itself. It is possible that the

author, with the external structure, follows closely to the internal, but this should not be

expected. Then, once the internal structure is clearly in view, there are several

approaches to uncovering its principle(s) of articulation. The most obvious and first

approach is to allow the author of the system to proclaim their own principles. Of course,

theologians don't always provide us with this luxury, but when they do, we should listen.

And, when this is the case, all that is left to determine is whether the parts articulated

with this given principle yield the whole that is expected by this system.[311] Of course,

checking a theologian's explicated principles of articulation with their system should

involve the same thoroughness as if they offered no such assistance, but when analysis

matches their own statement it allows for a further degree of certainty.

Even when the author of a system does not explicitly state their principle(s) of

articulation, if it is a system, it should be evident throughout the whole, in that the whole

is the product of the articulation of its parts. Therefore, the next step in uncovering the

principle(s) of articulation in a cognitive system of theology is to collect its/their implicit

indications throughout the work. Of course this involves a thorough understanding of the

work in question and possibly even the other works by the same author. Sometimes, in a

previous or subsequent work, authors will express principles of articulation intended to

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[311] Notice, this principle is not checked with the expectation of the whole as
asserted above, because in uncovering the articulation of a given system, the whole is
already present.

apply to their overall theological program as a larger whole. [312] Another hint to an author's principles of articulation is frequent repetition of theological formulas, motifs, phrases, etc. It may not guarantee the answer to this question, but repetition in any theologian's discourse certainly indicates an attempt to guide the reader towards the whole, which is expected by the author.

In addition to the thorough analysis above of the objective work (book, article, etc.), it is also necessary to achieve an understanding of the author's subjective processes in achieving their purposes. This is the epitome of "comprehension," that is, in this step of this analysis, the analyst must 'see' what the author of the system is 'seeing.' Another way to look at this is that, with the parts provided and the principle(s) that articulate them, one should be able to reproduce the whole much like math students correct their work by checking their answer with the solution provided by their textbook or professor. In this way, the analyst is expecting the same whole as the author of the system in question.

Finally, the third and final step in answering this question involves consulting the secondary material on the articulation of this system. Obviously there can be disagreement among commentators on this point or even the lack of comment altogether regarding the principle(s) of articulation in the system in question. However, after thorough analysis of one's own, and a substantial 'comprehension' of the author's expectations of the whole, comparison with other attempts at the same analysis could

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[312] Keckermann is a good example of this in that he provided a further explanation of his idea of system in his *Praecognitorum Logicorum*, which came after his first system.

provide additional insights. And this should complete the architectonic analysis recommended here.

Summary and Conclusions

As the first step in the first phase of this study, the first section of this chapter surveyed the historical and etymological development of the idea of system in its most formative period in theology and philosophy. Then that survey provided a contextual basis for the proposal of an intensional definition and the isolation of the three basic elements therein: the whole, parts, and articulation. Consequently, armed with a detailed understanding of these elements, this study has recommended the architectonic analysis, outlined above, for demonstrating or refining the meaning of this term as it is used in theology. If this instrument fulfills the expectation of this particular study, it should facilitate a greater level of clarity and precision in future usage of this term.

For this demonstration, two specific expressions of theology have been chosen for the reasons outlined earlier: St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theoologiae* and Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. Therefore, the following two chapters apply the above architectonic analysis to these two works, respectively, beginning with St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*.

CHAPTER 3

ARCHITECTONIC ANALYSIS OF ST. THOMAS

AQUINAS'S *SUMMA THEOLOGICA*

In the previous chapter we looked at the historical/etymological development of

the term "system" from its introduction in theological and philosophical discourse

through to the beginning of the twentieth century. Based on that survey an intensional

definition was provided for cognitive and ontological theological systems, that is, 'a

cognitive whole of articulated theological knowledge.' Then the particular elements of

this definition, the whole, parts, and articulation, were addressed separately. Finally,

based on this definition and its elements, an instrument of analysis was suggested, the

architectonic analysis, which is applied here to Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*.[1]

More specifically, in the architectonic analysis there are four questions

concerning systematicity ('Is the work in consideration a cognitive theological system?'),

whole ('What expectation is to be fulfilled by this system?'), parts ('What are the nature

and role(s) of the parts of this system?'), and articulation ('What is/are the principle(s) of

articulation in the internal structure of this system?') discussed above. In this chapter,

each of these questions is addressed to the *ST* in order to clarify the meaning and

demonstrate the function of system in a notable concrete example. Here it should be

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[1] Hereafter *ST*.

remembered, that though Aquinas's overall "system of thought" or the ontological system

he is describing can be analyzed as such, this analysis is focusing on the written work

describing a comprehensive, though limited cognitive system.

Before moving on to the first question, it should be remembered that Aquinas's

ST was chosen as an example to demonstrate the architectonic analysis for three reasons.

First, regardless of how much of it is subscribed to, there is general agreement, even

across disciplinary lines, that the *ST* is among the most important works in the history of

both theology and philosophy. Second, this work was published more than three

centuries before the term "system" had been incorporated into theological or

philosophical vocabulary. Finally, the *ST* is arguably the most respected system of

theology in the Catholic faith and as such provides helpful comparison and contrast with

Protestant systems.[2] Therefore, based on these reasons, the *ST* should be an excellent

candidate on which to demonstrate the architectonic analysis, which begins with the

question of systematicity.

Systematicity: Is the *ST* a Cognitive Theological System?

Statements by Aquinas

To begin with, it can be affirmed that there are no explicit statements regarding

the systematicity of the *ST* within the work itself. Neither are there any statements by

Aquinas in other documents directly addressing the systematicity of any of his works. In

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[2] The elevation of Thomas Aquinas to the position of *Doctor Angelicus* and "the primary theological Doctor" of the church at the council of Trent continues to stand as the official position of the Roman Catholic Church (Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy According to the Mind of St. Thomas

fact, as shown above in chapter 2, Aquinas does not ever use the word "system" (*systema*, etc.) in the sense of a cognitive system. But this doesn't mean he didn't speak indirectly of the systematicity of his work, only that he never used this particular terminology.

Actually, Aquinas did make several implicit statements that suggest that he saw his own work as a system of sorts. Probably the most significant of these statements is in his preface/prologue to the *ST* where he boldly states that his "purpose in this book" is to "treat of whatever belongs to the Christian Religion."[3] This "purpose" clearly fulfills, at least in intent, the element of a whole in the definition of a system. This statement also provides an idea of what the parts are, that is, "whatever belongs to the Christian religion." Certainly this is an ambitious undertaking, but, also in the preface, he clarifies that he intends to keep it succinct and focused and even brief.[4] And this was undoubtedly a welcome concession in that before his work there had been so many attempts at the same endeavor, which were not only long, but repetitious and certainly tedious.[5]

Another indication of Aquinas's systematic understanding is his usage of the term "*sacra doctrina*" which strongly suggests a sense of a "body of doctrine."[6] Now, this is not to say that he is using this term in a special way to denote system. Surely Aquinas was not the only theologian using this terminology and it was not meant to be in contrast

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Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, 1879, in the front matter of vol. 1, *ST*, ix–xviii. See also, Peter Kreeft, *A Summa of the Summa* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990], 12–13).

[3] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica (ST)* I, prologue.

[4] Ibid.

[5] "We have considered that students in this Science have not seldom been hampered by what they have found written by other authors, partly on account of the multiplication of useless questions, articles, and arguments; . . . partly, too, because frequent repetition brought weariness and confusion to the minds of the readers" (ibid).

to someone else's 'pile of doctrines.' It should be remembered, there were no

Kierkegaards or Nietzsches in Aquinas's day trying to undermine the coherence of

knowledge. Whatever else the philosophers and theologians squabbled about, the unity

of truth was not in question. Certainly there was tension over what was called "double-

truth" but this was not about a fragmentation of knowledge but rather the suggestion that

truth gave different values when processed by philosophy from when it was processed by

theology.[7] But when Aquinas writes of *sacra doctrina*, we know that it is from a

documented intense burden to show that both disciplines are looking at the selfsame body

of truth.[8]

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[6] Etienne Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Press, 1960), 22.

[7] Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 398.

[8] "The Knowledge of religion presupposes natural knowledge" (Aquinas, *Questiones disputatae de veritate* 14, 9); "evidently those who teach Holy Scripture must also make use of worldly wisdom" (Aquinas, *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* 3, 5, 411); "errors about Creation occasionally lead men astray from the truth of faith too" (Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* II, q. 3); "In this lies the whole secret of Thomism, in this immense effort of intellectual honesty to reconstruct philosophy on a plan which exhibits the *de facto* accord with theology as the necessary consequence of the demands of Reason itself, and not as the accidental result of a mere wish for conciliation" (Etienne Gilson, *Thomism: The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Laurence K. Shook and Armand Maurer [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2002], 26); "The highest principles of human thought, which are immediately evident to the human mind in its first activities, and which contain in germ all natural knowledge, are true beyond doubt. Now the truths of faith in no way contradict these highest principles or the truths derived from them. For the true can be opposed only to the false, never to another truth. Now the highest principles of human thought are true, as are also the truths of divine revelation and faith because confirmed by God. Hence a contradiction between the two is impossible" (Martin Grabmann, *Thomas Aquinas: His Personality and Thought*, trans. Virgil Michel [New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928], 88); and Josef Peiper, *Guide to Thomas Aquinas* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 120ff.

Concerning *articulation,* the closest thing we have from Aquinas, other than what

is implied with the term *sacra doctrina* above, is his statement in the prologue concerning

his intentions to order the material, "with God's help," according to the needs of the

student and as the material itself requires.[9] Beyond this, however, we are dependent on

the secondary sources or more importantly our own reading of Aquinas's great system.

Finally, for my purposes here, it is enough to say that Aquinas explicitly refers to

the whole both in terms of *structure* ("whatever belongs to the Christian religion") and

process ("the instruction of beginners" and "in order that the salvation of men might be

brought about more fitly and more surely");[10] the parts (again "whatever belongs to the

Christian religion" and the individual articles); and implicitly the articulation with his

expressed commitment to what is best for the student according to what the material

requires.

<div align="center">Secondary Source Statements</div>

Though Aquinas did not use the system terminology, there are secondary sources

that have. These statements are best understood in two categories: casual references to

Aquinas's work as a system and explanatory statements explaining how or to what extent

his work is a system.[11] The former are of little use for more than merely pointing out one

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[9] "Endeavoring to avoid these and other like faults, we shall try, by God's help, to set forth whatever is included in this sacred doctrine as briefly and clearly as the matter itself may allow" (Aquinas, *ST* I, prologue).

[10] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1. This is addressed further below.

[11] A few examples of the 'casual' statements are, Steven M. Cahn, *Philosophy for the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 35; Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 229; Grabmann, *Thomas Aquinas*, 68; W. J. Hankey, *God in Himself: Aquinas's Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae* (Oxford: Oxford University

of the problems this dissertation is attempting to overcome, that is, the diluted meaning of the term "system" used in the same way one would say "theory," "view," "philosophy," etc. Rather, the objective of this section is to determine to what extent the *ST* can be considered a "system" as described in chapter 2. Therefore, the latter category of statements is what is important here.

The statements explicitly addressing the systematicity of the *ST* can be divided into the somewhat obvious categories of positive and negative assessments, that is, statements that argue that the *ST* is a system, and those which argue that the *ST* is not a system. For the sake of simplicity the negative statements are addressed first.

There are at least two statements in the negative concerning the *ST* being a system: in Josef Peiper's *Guide to Thomas Aquinas*; and the introduction to Peter Kreeft's *A Summa of the Summa*.[12] The former follows a series of introductory-level lectures on the life and thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, and in the last section (xii), Peiper offers two arguments against the *ST* being a "closed system." The first of these arguments, that the *ST* is officially an unfinished work, is somewhat incidental but according to Peiper, still important.[13] It is important in that a closed system, without one or more of its parts, is not complete and thus not a system according to that definition.[14]

Press, 2004), 2; Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Being* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 202; Maurice de Wulf, *Medieval Philosophy Illustrated from the System of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922).

[12] Peiper, *Guide*, 157; Kreeft, *A Summa*, 14.

[13] Peiper, *Guide*, 157–158.

[14] Ibid., 158. Is this not reminiscent of Kierkegaard's insistence that "system and finality are pretty much one and the same, so much so that if the system is not finished, there is no system. . . . A system which is not quite finished is an hypothesis; while on the other hand to speak of a half-finished system is nonsense" (Kierkegaard, *Concluding*, 196)?

But, to Peiper, it is perhaps more important in Aquinas's case in that it is reported that his work on the *ST* wasn't cut short merely by his untimely death, but that shortly before his death he intentionally halted his writing with the dramatic proclamation: " All I have written seems to me nothing but straw–compared with what I have seen and what has been revealed to me."[15] As such, argues Peiper, "the fragmentary character of the *ST* is an inherent part of its statement," that statement being Aquinas's persistent warnings "that all our knowledge, including the knowledge of theologians, is fragmentary in character."[16]

And it is this very fact—of Aquinas's acceptance of the incompleteness of human knowledge—that is the basis of the second argument Peiper levies against the *ST* being a system.[17] He points out that the reason Aquinas is often mistaken as a systematist is that his explanations were so sober and thorough, but that this is "deceptive."[18] Rather, borrowing a phrase from Marie-Dominique Chenu (who, ironically speaks in the positive concerning the *ST* being a system), Peiper describes Aquinas's argumentation as being "within the mystery," and goes on to emphasize that Aquinas "was so little a classicist of systematic thought that, on the contrary, we become aware that he cherished 'an extreme suspicion of systems.'"[19]

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[15] *Fontes Vitae Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. D. Prümmer and M. H. Laurent (published in fascicles in *Revue Thomiste* 1911–1939), 376–378.

[16] Peiper, *Guide*, 158.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Introduction*, 158; Peiper, *Guide*, 158–159. Of course, this begs the question, as we have already seen that the term "system" as referring to cognitive systems had yet to surface in theological or philosophical usage, so Peiper is

Of course, Peiper's whole negative argument, concerning the *ST* being a system, is based on a somewhat specific or even narrow definition of system as a "closed" system, which he identifies especially with Hegel.[20] This form of system, according to Peiper, is an arrogant attempt to answer all possible questions that could arise from philosophy, science, religion, etc. And as such, his argument is not terribly difficult to defend, as the *ST* makes no pretensions to provide an exhaustive completing of all knowledge. And as Peiper points out, Aquinas is adamant about the folly of this.[21] Thus, all that can be positively said about Peiper's negative argument is that it precludes the possibility of the *ST* being an example of this closed system, which he has specifically described.

Kreeft's argument is quite close to Peiper's, though a bit more simple and direct. However, Kreeft lumps all *summas* together, arguing that "though very systematic, a Summa is not *a system* in the modern sense, a closed and deductive system like that of

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here putting the term "system," with his own narrow definition, into the mouth of Aquinas.

[20] "It is the misunderstanding of assuming that the *summas* are the most pretentious form of closed system—the closed system in the sense of Hegel. . . . By this misunderstanding, the *Summa Theologica* would pretend to be a system in which every question is treated and answered in its place, an adequate reflection of the essential reality of the universe—a total solution wherein even those problems which natural reason alone cannot settle would be given their final clarification in the answers of faith and theology" (Peiper, *Guide*, 157–158). Here, also, it should be evident from the previous chapter that even Hegel's *Phenomenologie* would not be properly described with this definition of system.

[21] "Thomas . . . actually calls ignorance the best part of knowledge itself" (Peiper, *Guide*, 159).

Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, or Hegel."[22] So, like Peiper, to Kreeft, the *ST* cannot be called a system when system is defined in one of these narrow senses.

This is a clear example of the distinction made by some between *open* and *closed* systems discussed above. And as such, when Peiper's argument is considered further, along with his other discussions concerning the unity and single mindedness of Aquinas's intellectual endeavors,[23] it can be considered a positive argument for the *ST* being an 'open system.' To be accurate it should be noted that, throughout his *Guide*, Peiper frequently emphasizes unity in Aquinas's work, not only in his Theological or Philosophical thought, but his intentional uniting of apparent divergent theological, philosophical, and even social forces in his world and times. And that uniting was directed precisely towards a single theological and philosophical end (if not organizing principle): "It may, then, be said with complete accuracy that this formal unity of philosophy and theology is the *structural principle* of St. Thomas' *summas*, especially his *Summa theologica*."[24] This, in light of the different possible approaches to system highlighted in the previous chapter, should allow us to determine only that Peiper and Kreeft preclude the possibility of the *ST* being a closed system as described in their work.

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[22] Kreeft, *A Summa*, 14. Concerning "deductive systems," Paul Tillich argues that "the history of science, philosophy, and theology shows that a deductive system has very rarely even been attempted except in the field of mathematics. . . . A system is a totality made up of consistent, but not of deduced, assertions" (Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951], 58–59).

[23] "In its bold and, incidentally, wholly original architecture St. Thomas' *Summa* is also attempting to give embodiment to an idea. Its structure attempts to express the structure of reality as a Whole. . . . It succeeds in linking history *and* system, in projecting the nature of reality as happening *within* the structure of ideas" (Peiper, *Guide*, 101).

[24] Ibid., 157.

In contradiction to these examples of reluctance, a few other of Aquinas's commentators seem confident in the systematicity of his work. Rudy te Velde, in his *Aquinas on God: The 'Divine Science'of the Summa Theologiae*, entitles his introduction "Thinking Systematically about God from Within the Christian Tradition."[25] Of course, the title alone makes a significant statement of the discussion at hand. Beyond the title of the chapter however, te Velde argues that "Thomas proceeds from a basic theological assumption, consisting in the claim that God has made known his truth to man through revelation and that, consequently, the truth claim of Christian faith—the 'system of revealed truth'—is warranted by God himself."[26]

Another significant statement comes from another introductory work by Robert Pasnau and Christopher John Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*.[27] In their chapter on "the goal of human life," the authors argue that the role of "man's last end," in Aquinas's overall philosophical thought, is an example for his "proclivities" toward "system-building." And, more specifically, they suggest it reveals an intentional and visible "systematicity."[28]

Then, in Martin Grabmann's *Thomas Aquinas: His Personality and Thought*, there are at least two references to system in the *ST*. The most direct is a statement

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[25] Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The 'Divine Science' of the Summa Theologiae* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 1.

[26] te Velde, *Aquinas*, 3.

[27] Robert Pasnau and Christopher John Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 197.

[28] Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 197. Also in their prologue, "Aquinas displays an uncommon, almost uncanny, ability to combine high-level systematicity with an exactness of detailed argumentation" (Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, vii).

regarding the seemingly unavoidable impression one gets from the *ST* of "the

architechtonic talent" and "systematizing genius of Thomas."[29] In an earlier, less explicit

reference, Grabman discusses the relationship, in the *ST*, between the universe as a *whole*

"made up of its parts" and the hierarchy or chain of ends/purposes of the lower parts to

higher and finally to the whole-as-such.[30] Thus, even in Aquinas, the distinctions

between system as structure and system as process and the cognitive and ontological

aspects of the whole requires attention, which are discussed further below.

Finally, before drawing conclusions on the systematicity of the *ST*, there is one

concern that should be addressed. Due to the fact of Aquinas's respect for Aristotle as

'the philosopher' and the foundational role that Aristotelian philosophy played in

Aquinas's intellectual development and in virtually all of his works, it could be argued

that the *ST* was not really a new system, but merely a commentary on an old one,

Aristotle's.[31] And, though the *ST* is arguably one of the most helpful explanations of

much of Aristotle's system (if it can be called such), in both his expressed intention and

the opinion of his commentators, the *ST* is a new system with unique contributions in

terms of its purpose, and its fulfillment of the elements of the definition of the term

"system" provided here.[32] And, though Aquinas and Aristotle might seem to share much

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[29] Grabmann, *Thomas Aquinas*, 158.

[30] Ibid., 114.

[31] One historian calls the *ST* "a monument to Aristotelianism in its Christian form" (Edward Peters, *Europe and the Middle Ages* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983], 223). Then in an encyclopedic reduction: "St. Thomas was a prolific writer, but he is best known for his *Summa Theologica*, in which he substituted Christian Aristotelianism for Augustinianism" (Joseph P. Hester, *Encyclopedia of Values and Ethics* [Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1996], 41).

[32] This is discussed further below.

in terms of the articulation of their systems—the pervasive concepts of being and causality—it is shown below that Aquinas's primary principles of articulation are not purely Aristotelian, but represent a unique synthesis of Aristotle with other masters such as Plato, Augustine, the Damascene, Boetheus, etc.

Therefore, in light of Aquinas's own explicit intentions, the affirmations of his biographers, commentators, and evidence provided in the questions to follow, I feel confident calling the *ST* a "system," in the sense of the intensional definition in chapter 2. And, this being the case, it should provide fruitful soil as a case study for the meaning of "system" in theology. And, having answered the first question in the architectonic analysis in the affirmative, it is possible to move to the second question.

Whole: What Expectation Is to Be Fulfilled by This System?

The *ST* anticipates its whole in both the aspects of structure and process. In terms of structure, Aquinas describes his system as an expression or exposition of *sacra doctrina*, that is, a body of theological doctrines or teachings.[33] In addition to this, however, he seems to conceive his system also as a process in that he expresses the ambitious intention that his system will effect nothing less than the salvation of his readers.[34]

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[33] Aquinas, *ST* I, prologue.

[34] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1.

The *ST* as Structure

Aquinas is quite clear concerning his expectations in terms of structure. To him, the reader should expect the *ST* to "treat of whatever belongs to the Christian religion."[35] And this whole he calls *sacra doctrina*, a comprehensive body of Christian doctrine, presented for "beginners." Unfortunately, as noted above, Aquinas did not complete the *ST* according to his plan, but what is missing should not detract significantly from his goal in light of the massive amount of material that was completed. Furthermore, thanks to the assistance of his friends (most likely Fra Rainaldo da Piperno), who gathered his previous work on the topics left unfinished, we have a pretty good idea of how Aquinas might have finished the *ST*.[36] Notwithstanding, having completed a study of this work, one should expect to have a basic knowledge of Christian theology as it was conceived in the twelfth century.[37]

Certainly the reader is the judge whether the *ST* actually deals with the whole of Christian Theology adequately, but readers today must be careful to remember the limitations of Aquinas's age. There were limitations not only to what had yet to be thought or published but also to what had come before but had yet to be discovered. To these, we must add the prejudices, which limit every age's perspective. At least for my

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[35] Aquinas, *ST* I, prologue.

[36] Of course, we can never know if Aquinas had changed any of his views on these topics.

[37] The value of the *ST* as a textbook for theology is affirmed extraordinarily in the Roman Catholic tradition with its elevation to "glory" as an example to be striven for in all other Theological and Philosophical endeavors (Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy According to the Mind of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, 1879, in the front matter of *ST I*, ix–xviii). In fact, in non-Catholic institutions there has been a renewed interest in Aquinas and his *ST* in the past few decades as well (Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, vii).

purposes here, however, I can safely affirm that, in comparison with other collections of

theological doctrine, the *ST* is at least above par, if not well beyond in terms of its

comprehensive treatment of the material available.[38]

The *ST* as Process

As noted above, in addition to gaining an intellectual knowledge of his system as

a body of doctrine, in the first article of the first question of the *ST*, Aquinas expresses the

hope that his readers should also advance towards salvation (*humanam salutem*) as the

result of their careful study of *sacra doctrina*.[39] This is not to say that one could effect

their complete salvation, justification, sanctification, etc., merely by intellectually

mastering the *ST*, all of Scripture, or any other knowledge. Rather, Aquinas is arguing

that, in the act of salvation, certain types of knowledge are necessary ("it was necessary

for man's salvation that there be a knowledge"), though not to be confused with the First

Cause of salvation, God.[40] Therefore, without sacred doctrine (*doctrinam quandam*

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[38] te Velde, *Aquinas*, 9.

[39] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1.

[40] Ibid. Interestingly, Gilson describes the salvific effect of *sacra doctrina* as the "material reason" which unites 'revelation' with the rest of knowledge: "To the extent that it pertains to the sacred teaching imparted to man through revelation (*sacra doctrina*) theology must deal with some philosophically knowable truths, namely, those whose knowledge is required for the salvation of any man; for instance, God exists, he is one, he is incorporeal, etc. Since they have been in fact revealed to men, these truths were revealable, but the formal reason of the 'revealable' extends even beyond the limits of the actually revealed; it includes the whole body of human natural knowledge inasmuch as it can be considered by the theologian in the light of revelation and used by him in view of its end, which is the salvation of man in general. This leaves intact, within theology, the formal distinction between natural knowledge and supernatural knowledge, but it includes them both under a still wider formal reason since 'revealables' comprise the whole body of natural cognitions considered as being at the disposal of the theologian in view of his own theological end which is the salvation of man" (Gilson, *History*, 367). As implied here, though neither Gilson nor Aquinas uses the term "cause" in this context,

124

secundum revelationem divinam), a knowledge of one's ultimate destiny (*ultimo fine humanae*) and its means is incomplete.[41] And, consequently, readers can expect Aquinas's system to assist in bringing about "more fitly and more surely" the salvation of humanity.

It is interesting that, other than this and his description of the *ST* as a "textbook for beginners," Aquinas offers no other purposes for his system. Surely, this is a testimony to the confidence-in-humility that comes through in all of his work. Though a renowned scholar, there is no evidence in the *ST* of attempts to 'champion' any new, controversial, or pet theories of his. Not that Aquinas didn't address the controversies of his day in many of the articles of the *ST*, but he consistently does it from the position of some other accepted authority.[42] And though he hardly introduces a single novelty— philosophically or theologically—what is considered significant about his contribution is his synthesis.[43] Thus, from his personal motivations as a teacher and a pastor, his only

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it is certainly implied in both sets of statements here, at least three of the four causes: material–knowledge, formal–human salvation, efficient–God. And, with the rest of the *ST* taken into account, it is not difficult to see the fourth, the final cause–the beatific vision.

[41] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1; Aquinas, *ST* II, q. 1, a. 1. Further, te Velde clarifies that "it is also knowledge [*sacra doctrina*] by which man is led effectively through the work of Christ (and the beneficial gifts of the sacraments) to an eternal life of beatitude in unity with God. This sacramental aspect of sacred doctrine—which justifies the inclusion of Christ and his sacraments as means of salvation in the *Tertia Pars*—is easily overlooked, as it is touched on only implicitly in the introductory question of the *Summa*" (te Velde, *Aquinas*, 22).

[42] Almost invariably, after listing real objections to his opinion, his *sed contra* ("on the contrary") is followed by *est quod* ("it is said by") where he quotes the authority best known for the position he is advocating. Of course other than Scripture, his favorites seem to be Augustine, "the Damascene" (John of Damascus), and Aristotle, with a spattering of others throughout.

[43] Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 364.

objectives in his magnum opus are to "instruct beginners" and to assist in the "salvation"

of his readers "more fitly and more surely."

Therefore the whole to be expected in Aquinas's system is two-fold. As a

structure, one can expect a comprehensive treatment of Christian theology. As a process,

one can expect to be advanced towards salvation. Of course "the which" of the doctrines

included in the structure and "the how" of the process of salvation in Aquinas's system

are addressed below. For now it is sufficient to establish "the what" of the whole which

is expected in his system and that by his own intentions can be seen as either a structure

or process, as illustrated in fig. 3.
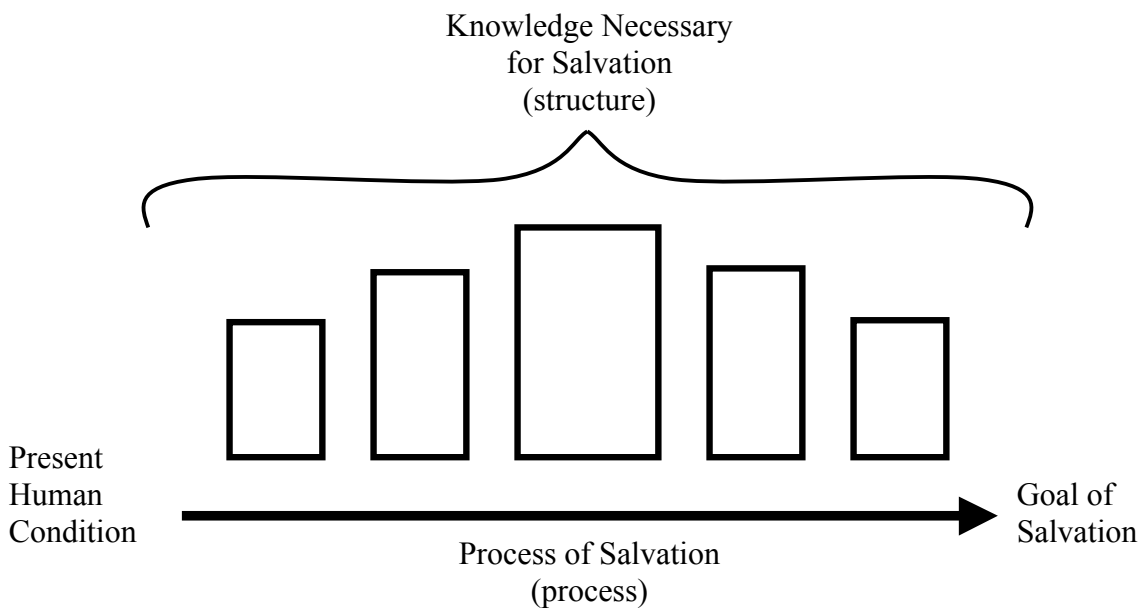
Figure 3. Structure and process in the *Summa Theologica*.

Parts: What Are the Nature and Role(s)
of the Parts of This System?

The Nature of the Parts

In terms of the nature of the parts in Aquinas's system, he is refreshingly explicit.
Early on he specifies that, in order to fulfill the expectations discussed above, it is
necessary that his students "should be taught divine truths by divine revelation"—in
addition to—"philosophical science built up by human reason."[44] Here it is interesting to
note that Aquinas is not suggesting the 'adding' of philosophy to theology. Rather, he is
presupposing philosophical truths and arguing that, for Christians or anyone who is
interested in "salvation," Christian theology (*sacra doctrina*) should be added to what
reason has already shown us.[45] See fig. 4.
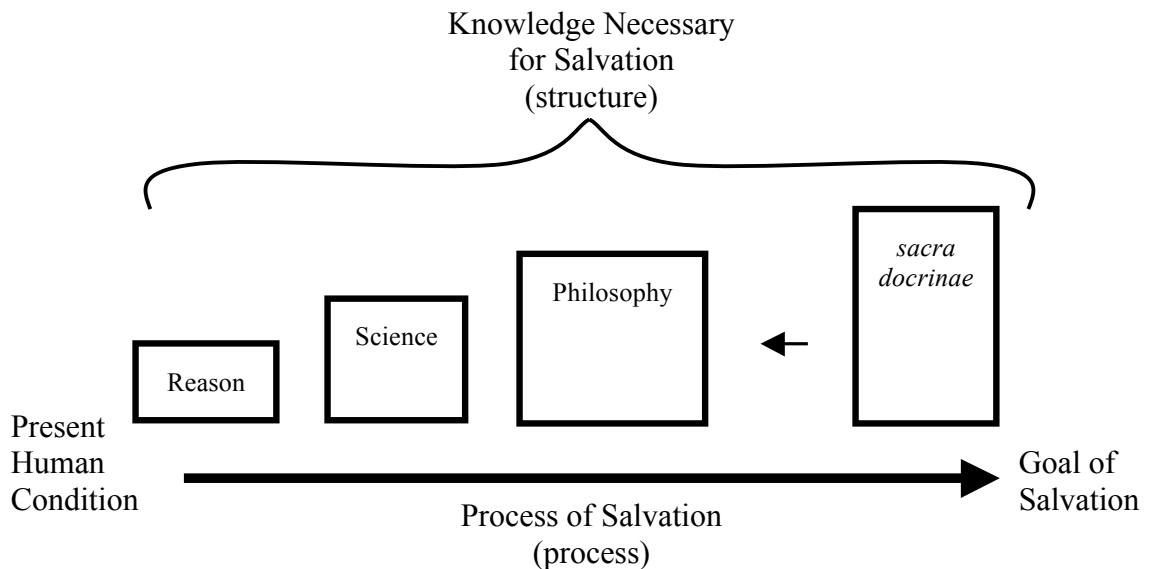
Figure 4. Relationship between philosophy and theology in the *Summa Theologica*.

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[44] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1.

[45] Ibid.

Thus, though Aquinas's system is mostly Christian theological doctrines, it presupposes philosophical doctrines and, as such, many of the parts can be said to involve either or both.[46]

Based on Aquinas's argument here, however, philosophy is not being used to prove theology. Rather, Aquinas is trying to show that theology is needed to complete what was missing in philosophy.[47] Of course this gives the reader only a clue as to which philosophy and which theology Aquinas uses in his system which is discussed below. But in terms of nature, for now we can at least determine that both philosophical and theological doctrines are included in his system.

It should also be noted that this formula—whatever can be known through reason plus whatever God chooses to add through revelation—precludes any possible limits to what is included or excluded in terms of parts, doctrines, etc.[48] As such, there is no knowledge that is not eligible to be subsumed in *sacra doctrina*. Furthermore, this epistemology corresponds with Aquinas's metaphysics, for to him, "in a certain sense, 'God' is another name for 'everything,'" the only limits being human knowledge (to date) and God's freedom in his revelation.[49] Interestingly, this suggests that several centuries before the closed vs. open system distinction, Aquinas indicates, in his own description of

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[46] It should be remembered also that Aquinas is usually explicit when referring to a source, whether philosophical or theological.

[47] Aquinas's use of philosophy is discussed further below.

[48] Of course it could be argued that the condition of truth could be a limit in that it would influence what can be "known" or "revealed." But isn't it also the case that false knowledge still sheds light on the true and contributes to the whole?

[49] te Velde, *Aquinas*, 3.

his work, that his system is open.[50] Therefore, the nature of the parts of the *ST* can be any

type of human knowledge or revealed truths that would fulfill the whole expected as

sacra doctrina, which implies the role(s) of those parts, bringing us to the next step in

answering this question.

The Role(s) of the Parts

As explained in the previous chapter, the role of the parts in a system involves

their relationships with each other and the whole. In the *ST* the parts relate to each other

and the whole in both aspects of structure and process. In fact, Aquinas addresses this in

terms of the debates of his time concerning "speculative" and "practical" science, arguing

that "although among the philosophical sciences one is speculative and another practical,

nevertheless sacred doctrine includes both," with the speculative being primary.[51] In this

way, the *ST* is primarily a cognitive structure made up of Christian doctrines, but these

doctrines describe the ontological process of God's work in space and time, "as God, by

one and the same science, knows both Himself and His works."[52] Thus, the parts of

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[50] See note 273 in chapter 2.

[51] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 4.

[52] Ibid. "Its [the *ST*'s] structure attempts to express the structure of reality as a whole" (Peiper, *Guide*, 101). "The impossibility of enclosing the object of theology–God's inner mystery and the divine economy of creation and salvation–within any plan, makes the options adopted all the more decisive. Within theology, scientific wisdom collides not only with the mystery of faith, but also with the radical contingency of facts within a history of salvation. . . . But it [the theme of emanation and return in the *ST*] also proves to be open to history, in contrast to the determinism of the Greeks, by situating the facts and events of sacred history within the trajectory of emanation and return" (Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology*, trans. Paul Philibert [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002], 137. This concept of "emanation and return" is discussed further below.

Aquinas's system can be best understood in terms of their distinct roles in the dual aspects of the whole.

The Role(s) of the Parts of the *ST* as Structure

In terms of the roles of the parts in the cognitive structure, as it was pointed out in the second chapter, it should be remembered that the parts of a cognitive system can be understood at the external or presentation level (as in the table of contents) and at the internal level, which is of more consequence in this analysis. Consequently, the roles of the parts of the *ST* are indicated by Aquinas's own descriptions or labeling. At the external level, he titles his work, *summa*, as the form of the external structure of his system. Regarding the internal structure he describes his work as *sacra doctrina*.

The *ST* as *Summa*

In choosing an overall format for his greatest work, Aquinas chooses *summa*. This is not terribly informative, however, as among the works bearing this title, the only consistency in format was an intention for comprehensiveness.[53] Possibly, he chose his format and title from the literature of his day so that the presentation would be somewhat familiar, while the system it contained was startlingly fresh.[54] And regardless of his intentions in his title, it should not have any significant bearing on this analysis.[55] As a

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[53] Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 298.

[54] For Aquinas's reluctance to carve his own terminology, see F. A. Blanche, "Sur la langue technique de Saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue de Philosophie* 30 (1930): 13.

[55] "For what is a *summa*, if not a concise unifying of individual items? . . . Indeed, a *summa* is a comprehensive collection of these" (Robert of Melun, *Sententie*, prefatio, in *Œuvres de Robert de Melun*, ed. Raymond M. Martin [Louvain: Spiciligium Sacrum

guide for my analysis of the internal structure below, however, at least a summary of this level should be worth discussing.

Therefore, as a *summa*, Aquinas describes the *external* structure of his system in three main parts.[56] Part I has 119 "questions" beginning with the idea of sacred doctrine (question 1), and moving on to deal with the doctrines of "God" (questions 2-26), the "Blessed Trinity" (questions 27-43), "creation" (questions 44-49), "the angels" (questions 50-64), "the six days (matter)" (questions 65-74), "man (spirit and matter)" (questions 75-102), and "the government of creatures" (questions 103-119).[57]

Lovaniense, 1947], 3). Surely, the farther one gets in exploring the different expressions of theology over the centuries, the more aware they might become of the ambiguities in naming these different approaches. An interesting example of this is an attempt by Tillich, in the introduction to his *Systematic Theology,* to clarify the nuances in different theological forms: "System stands between *summa* and essay. The *summa* deals explicitly with *all actual* and many potential problems. The essay deals explicitly with *one actual* problem. The system deals with a group of *actual* problems which demand a solution in a special situation. In the middle Ages the *summa* was predominant, although the systematic trend never ceased to exist. Today a need for systematic form has arisen in view of the chaos of our spiritual life and the impossibility of creating a *summa*" (Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 59). Possibly, in his attempt to bring some precision to this problem, Tillich may have only exacerbated it by making these apparently arbitrary distinctions. Aquinas's *ST*, arguably the best-known *summa*, clearly doesn't represent this definition. Further, neither does the majority of the discourse about "system" in chapter 2 of this dissertation harmonize with Tillich's understanding here. Thus, caution must be maintained whenever discussing these various forms of expression, while not neglecting the importance of further clarity, which is the aim of this dissertation regarding the meaning of the word "system." Concerning Aquinas's use of the title *summa* for his system, however, it is enough to say that he was using a title that was relatively popular in his own times, while not detracting from his purposes to provide a genre-defining work of theology.

[56] In many of the editions of the *ST*, one or more of these parts are divided further for practical reasons.

[57] Possibly, Aquinas's own transitions, provided in his brief introductions to each part, are at least as helpful as the listing of the doctrines covered; e.g.: "now that we have treated of the exemplar, i.e., God, and of those things which came forth from the power of God in accordance with His will; it remains for us to treat of His image, i.e., man,

Part II is usually divided into two parts: II-I (*prima secundae parties*) and II-II (*secunda secundae parties*). Part II-I has 114 questions dealing with the doctrines of "man's last end" (questions 1-5), "human acts" (questions 6-21), "passions" (questions 22-48), "habits" (questions 49-70), "vice and sin" (questions 71-89), "law" (questions 90-108), "grace" (questions 109-114). Part II-II has 189 questions on the doctrines of "faith" (questions 1-16), "hope" (questions 17-22), "charity" (questions 23-46), "prudence" (questions 47-56), "justice" (questions 57-122), "fortitude" (questions 123-140), "temperance" (questions 141-170), and "acts which pertain especially to certain men" (questions 171-189). Part III[58] has 90 questions on the doctrines of "the Incarnation" (questions 1-26), "the life of Christ" (questions 27-59), "the Sacraments" (questions 60-65), "baptism" (questions 66-71), "confirmation" (question 72), "the Holy Eucharist" (questions 73-83), and "penance" (questions 84-90).

Then, each of the questions is divided further by anywhere from a couple to a dozen or more "articles." Each article begins with "objections," which are quotes of

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inasmuch as he too is the principle of his actions, as having free-will and control of his actions" (Aquinas, *ST* II, prologue).

[58] Aquinas actually never completed the third part of the *ST*, specifically before finishing the doctrine of penance. However, from his prologue to part three, we are given an idea of what the rest would look like: "It is necessary, in order to complete the work of theology, that after considering the last end of human life, and the virtues and vices, there should follow the consideration of the Saviour of all, and of the benefits bestowed by Him on the human race. Concerning this we must consider (1) the Saviour Himself; (2) the sacraments by which we attain to our salvation; (3) the end of immortal life to which we attain by the resurrection" (Aquinas, *ST* III, prologue). Therefore, presumably what is missing is the last part of his doctrine of penance, the doctrine of extreme unction, and whatever doctrines he might have included in the missing treatise on "the end of immortal life to which we attain by the resurrection." It should be noted as well that in a "supplement" to part three, collected presumably by his close friend Fra Rainaldo da Piperno, statements from Aquinas's commentary on the fourth book of the *Sentences of Peter Lombard* (*Scriptum super Sententiis*) are arranged to finish his doctrine of penance, the doctrines of extreme unction, holy orders, matrimony, and the resurrection.

notable authorities—including Scripture—which 'contradict' the position Aquinas is arguing.[59] After these objections, a concise statement of his position is offered. This statement always begins with the phrase, "on the contrary" (*sed contra*) followed usually by a quote from Scripture, Augustine, Aristotle, the Damascene, etc. Though, rarely, this statement is his own.[60] Then, after this statement, Aquinas provides a longer explanation of his answer, which always begins with "I answer that . . ." (*respondeo dicendum*). Finally, he returns to objections, responding to each with specific "replies." As such, we then have this overall summary of the external structure of 'parts' divided into 'questions,' which are divided into 'articles,' which are divided into Aquinas's position ("I answer that . . ."), its objections and his replies.

Again, as was discussed in chapter 2, at this level, the relationships and roles of the parts are of little consequence. The outline provided for the plan of the book, however, can be very helpful in guiding the analysis of the parts at the internal level, and the *ST* is no exception to this as is evident below in the discussion of the principles of articulation.[61] Therefore, the outline provided above can serve in exploring the role(s) of the parts at the internal level of the cognitive structure of the *ST*.

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[59] It is notable that these objections are seldom anything like 'straw men,' that is, positions that are easily overturned. Actually, he often includes Scripture texts in this list, and often he includes the same authorities he uses to support his own views in other places, such as Augustine, Aristotle, the Damascene, etc. Thus it is no surprise he is known for his contribution to dialectical method in that he gives his opponents a real voice in his dialogue, if not a clearer voice than they had given themselves heretofore (Peiper, *Guide*, 38).

[60] See Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 4.

[61] In the arguments concerning Aquinas's principles of articulation several commentators use his table of contents to demonstrate their view or to discredit another's.

In terms of the internal roles of the parts of the *ST*, Aquinas implies relationships between the parts and the whole (to treat of whatever "pertains" [*pertinent*] to *sacred doctrine*) as well as relationships between the parts themselves (whatever the "matter allows" [*quod materia patietur*]).[62] And, based on the discussion in chapter 2, it should be possible to describe the parts of the *ST* in terms of necessity and dependence. Remember, necessity refers to the relationships of the parts to the whole, that is, which parts are necessary to fulfill the expected whole, while dependence refers to the relationships of the parts to each other, that is, which parts can also function as a whole without the other parts.

On the surface, one might suppose that, according to Aquinas's own descriptions of his work, any part that can be said to "pertain" to *sacra doctrina* or even "Christian religion" is necessary to the whole that his readers should expect.[63] However, in that the object of the phrase, "whatever pertains to . . . ," is also the expected whole, this is merely a circular statement that can be rephrased as, "the parts that are necessary to the whole are those parts that are included therein."

Unfortunately, Aquinas does not provide any further criteria for the parts necessary for the cognitive structure of the whole. In other words, to Aquinas, if one wants to inventory the doctrines (cognitive parts) necessary to *sacra doctrina*, they need only read the *ST*. He does not leave us here though, but in the section below on the *ST* as

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[62] Aquinas, *ST* I, preface. Notice the similarities with Wolf's discussion of how the parts can be joined only if they are fit to be such, discussed in chapter 2.

[63] Aquinas, *ST* I, preface.

ordo disciplinae, he provides more insight into the internal structure and relationships of the parts to the whole. Before looking at that, however, there is also the relationships of the parts with each other in the *sacra doctrinae*.

Also, in terms of dependence, Aquinas does not necessarily address this explicitly, but it is implied in his argument for *sacred doctrine* being a "science." The main objection he was addressing is that it cannot be a science in that science "proceeds" (*procedit*) from "self-evident principles."[64] To the contrary, Aquinas argues that there are two kinds of sciences: those that proceed from self-evident principles (such as mathematics and geometry) and those that proceed from principles from a "higher science" (such as the science of perspective which "proceeds from the principles of geometry").[65] And *sacred doctrine* is dependent on higher principles that are "revealed by God."[66] In fact, he specifies that these principles come from a "higher science," the "science of God and the blessed" (*quae scilicet est scientia Dei et beatorum*).[67]

Therefore, those parts that can be considered the principles from which the *sacra doctrinae* "proceeds from" are imported from a higher science and can (and do) exist as wholes outside the context of the *ST*. As such, these are independent parts. All other parts of the *sacra doctrina*, inasmuch as they "proceed" from these, can be considered dependent. Consequently, based on the categories discussed in chapter 2, there are only two groups of parts in terms of their roles in the *ST*: necessary/independent parts (the "revealed principles") and necessary/dependent parts (all other parts in the *ST*). The

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[64] Ibid., q. 1, a. 2.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

other two categories (superfluous/dependent and superfluous/independent) are not represented in the cognitive structure of the *ST*, in that Aquinas intended the *ST* to treat only what was necessary.

Concordantly, the categories of passive or active parts in terms of articulation can be considered to follow these two in that the independent parts (the "revealed principles") are active in that they determine what should be added to complete the *sacra doctrinae* ("whatever pertains/belongs to sacred doctrine" *quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinent*).[68] And those parts that are added on that basis are passive in that they are determined to 'fit' ("as the matter allows" *quod materia patietur*).[69]

In summary, the parts in the internal structure (*sacra doctrinae*) of the *ST* can be categorized into two groups in terms of their roles. First, there is the "revealed principles," which are the active parts that are necessary to the whole and independent of the other parts. The other group is the rest of the parts, that is, "all that pertains to" (necessary) and which passively "proceed from" (dependent) the first group. Since the purpose of this chapter is merely to demonstrate the architectonic analysis on the *ST*, it is beyond the scope here to list the doctrines or parts of each group specifically. It should be sufficient to establish the criteria provided by Aquinas to distinguish between them. In the last question concerning articulation, however, some of the principles in the first group above are discussed further in their role as principles of articulation. In the meantime, it is necessary to complete this question by looking at the roles of the parts in the *ST* as process.

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[68] Aquinas, *ST* I, preface.

[69] Ibid.

The Role(s) of the Parts of the *ST* as Process

As was shown above, Aquinas intended this system to fulfill expectations of structure as well as process. Therefore, the parts of the *ST* should be expected to relate in terms of both aspects. As structure, Aquinas describes the *ST* as *sacra doctrinae*. However, he describes the process of the reader's progression through the *ST* as a textbook as *ordo disciplinae*.[70] Thus, by adding the dimension of process, further clarity should be realized concerning the roles of the parts within the *ST*.

The *ST* as *Ordo Disciplinae*

Interestingly, in his attempt to produce, in essence, a theological "primer," the *internal* structure of Aquinas's *ST* seems to be a compromise of sorts. The accepted norm for format in theological works was the *questio disputata* ("the disputed question"), which was his preferred "form for teaching and writing."[71] This was also the form used in the great *sententiae* ("sentences") of Peter Lombard and others, which were layered compilations of "opinions" built on existing commentaries by the Church Fathers on Scripture.[72] Over the centuries, further commentary is added, resulting ideally in a dynamic conversation between Scripture and the greatest minds of every generation on all the topics considered relevant to Christian scholars. And, to an extent, Aquinas implements this within the format of the *ST*.

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Chenu, *Aquinas*, 133.

[72] John Marenbon, *Later Medieval Philosophy (1150–1350): An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 18ff.

Due to the nature of such a conversation, however, in this format—called *ordo doctrinae* (according to the needs of the professor)—the topics discussed are chosen and followed according to the priorities of the speakers (authors, scholars, etc.).[73] As such, this approach was often rather tedious and was not considered by Aquinas to be ideal for the novice.[74] Therefore, he chose to "avoid these and other like faults" by presenting his *ST* "as briefly and clearly as the matter itself may allow."[75] The approach he chose instead, which reined in the meandering of traditional sentences and *disputata*, Aquinas called the *ordo disciplinae* (according to the needs of the student or material), which was driven more by the needs of the "beginners."[76] Additionally, this was the order of "discovery" (*inventio*), that is, the "way that one directs oneself through the process of discovering something one does not know."[77] This was also considered the closest one could get to the order that would describe human 'Reason' if it were allowed to follow its own inquiry, unhindered.[78]

Of course, in order to "treat" (*tradere*) such a comprehensive body of doctrine as "whatever belongs to the Christian Religion," the form of 'treatise', which usually only deals with a single doctrine, subject, topic, etc., would be too narrow. Therefore, in his attempt to avoid the pitfalls of the *ordo doctrinae*, while still dealing with the whole of *sacra doctrina*, Aquinas chose a form in which the individual articles resemble the form

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[73] te Velde, *Aquinas*, 23.

[74] Aquinas, *ST* I, prologue.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Toward Understanding* (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1964), 301.

[77] Aquinas, *De Veritate*, II, 1.

[78] Sometimes called the "discursive movement of reason" (te Velde, *Aquinas*, 24).

of *questio disputata*–though much more concise, while the larger questions, which the articles comprise, resemble comprehensive basic treatises on essential doctrines according to the *ordo disciplinae*.

Therefore, as a process, the *ST* guides its readers from treatise to treatise based on what Aquinas expected to be the natural order in which the mind prefers to learn. As such, the parts of this process relate to both the whole and each other accordingly. Remember, the whole, in terms of process is the 'end,' towards which the subject moves through the *middle* (or *means*), from the beginning. The end of the *ordo disciplinae* would be the reader's complete knowledge or comprehension of the *sacra doctrinae* while the beginning would be that reader before commencing their study of the *ST* as novice and having little knowledge or comprehension of the *sacra doctrinae*. Then, the in-between/middle/means would be the individual parts or doctrines of *sacra doctrinae* in their natural sequence as the mind apprehends them or as "the matter allows."[79]

Thus, the parts of the *ST* as *ordo disciplinae* relate to the whole in that each is necessary to the reader's completed knowledge. They would relate to each other according to Aquinas's idea of the natural order of mind, that is, each part would be after a particular part and before another, while the first part in the sequence would come only before the second and after none. Of course, the only evidence Aquinas provides to support his claim that the *ST* actually follows this natural order of mind is the *ST* itself. He does, however, provide some insight into the teleological principle of *ordo disciplinae*, which is discussed below.

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[79] And, presumably, this order corresponds to Aquinas's plan of the book.

The *Sacra Doctrinae* as 'Salvific Knowledge'

In the first article of the first question of the *ST*, Aquinas makes clear that the teleological principle of *sacra doctrinae* is the salvation of mankind: "It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God besides philosophical science built up by human reason."[80] Without actually providing reasons for treating one particular doctrine before or after another, this principle, taken with the actual concrete table of contents of the *ST*, provides clues to Aquinas's idea of *ordo disciplinae*. Thus, if the *ordo disciplinae* is the process aspect of *sacra doctrinae,* then "the salvation of men" should be the result of this process; that is, the doctrines should be ordered in a way that the student, moving from one to the next, should finally at the end have the knowledge necessary for salvation. Of course, this would imply, in terms of process, a chain of logical dependence of the doctrines farther along in the sequence on those earlier, with the earlier ones providing a logical or explanatory basis for the latter ones.

But remember, this principle is only secondarily objective, that is, 'what can be known about a thing,' as with most sciences in terms of 'knowledge for knowledge's sake' (*scientia*). But here Aquinas is emphasizing that the teleological principle is primarily the salvific effect that a knowledge of God has on the knower (*sapientia*). In fact, in arguing that *sacra doctrinae* is a science (*scientia*), Aquinas makes a point to define it not merely as the 'knowledge of God' (*scientia Dei*), but as the "knowledge of

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[80] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1. This is discussed further in the final questions regarding *articulation*, but here it is helpful in understanding how the parts relate in the *ST* as process.

140

God and the blessed" (*scientia Dei et beatorum*).[81] Here the term "blessed" refers to individuals who have already attained perfect happiness (*beatudo*) in union with God, and as such are examples of the effect that this knowledge is to have on its subjects.[82] Therefore, the *ordo disciplinae* is only secondarily a logical sequence of knowledge. Primarily it is a logical sequence of wisdom (*sapientia*), which, as a virtue, leads its subject to happiness.[83] Consequently, the roles of the parts of the *ST* as process can be described in terms of logical sequence leading to salvation and happiness.

In this section it has been shown that the nature of the parts of the *ST* involves both theological and philosophical doctrines. Then it was demonstrated that the parts relate to the whole and the other parts in terms of both structure and process. In terms of structure, there are two groups of parts: the divinely revealed principles and those doctrines that proceed from the former. Both groups are considered necessary with no superfluous parts. However, the parts in the former group are independent and active, while the parts in the latter group are dependent and passive.

In terms of process, the parts relate to the whole and to each other in a sequence Aquinas calls *ordo disciplinae*. In this sequence, the parts are ordered according to the "discursive movement of reason" and "the needs of the student." But this order is not to reflect merely the needs of the student to know what there is to know about theology. This order, rather, was to follow the students' natural progress towards ultimate happiness through salvific knowledge. Of course, how this process orders the parts is

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[81] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 2.

[82] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 12, a. 1; *ST* II, q. 1, a. 7; *ST* II, q. 3, a. 8. See also, Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History* (London: Yale Nota Bene, 2001), 89ff.

still not explicit until understood in the light of the principles, which bring about their articulation.

Articulation: What Is/Are the Principle(s) of Articulation in the Internal Structure of This System?

Having identified the whole to be expected (a comprehensive system of Christian theology leading to salvation) and the roles of the parts (in the structure and process of the *ST*) included within, the articulation, through which the parts fulfill the expectation of the whole, can be explored. As noted in the last chapter, the first step in answering this question is distinguishing the internal articulation from the external. The external articulation would be the articulation of parts of the *ST* as *summa* reflected by the table of contents. At the internal level, the parts to be articulated are the doctrines of the *sacra doctrinae*. Furthermore, their articulation should reflect the structure of the *sacra doctrinae* and the *process* of the *ordo disciplinae* as outlined above. Therefore, this section explores the possible principles that articulate the parts of the *ST* in these aspects of the whole, beginning with the latter.

Articulation of the Parts as *Ordo Disciplinae*

The *ordo disciplinae* refers to the articulation of the *ST*, in that Aquinas collects and joins the parts of the *ST*, as a system, according to the needs of his readers. This involves the "choosing" aspect of articulation in terms of both the including and excluding of the parts of the system, that is, including all that is essential to a

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[83] Aquinas, *ST* II, q. 5, a. 7.

comprehensive exposition of Christian theology, while excluding "useless questions, articles, and arguments."[84]

Also, in the prologue, Aquinas reveals, to an extent, how the parts are actually connected or arranged in his description of what the *ordo disciplinae* is not: that is, it is not the connecting of the parts according to the "plan of the book" (*secundum quod requirebat librorum expositio*), nor is it according to the "argument" (*vel secundum quod se praebebat occasio disputandi*).[85] Also, it should be pointed out that the juxtaposition Aquinas supplies here should expand the definition of the term *ordo disciplinae* to include the literal translation of this phrase, "order of instruction."[86] In other words, what makes the *ordo disciplinae* fit the needs of the student is that it fits the needs of the material being presented (the parts). As noted above, this is sometimes called the order of "discovery" (*inventio*), which is the way a rational mind, unhindered, arrives naturally at a proper understanding of a particular truth.[87] And this is meant to be more beneficial to the student than the way in which "doctors" (*ordo doctrinae*) usually order their books or argue with each other.

Thus, as a principle of articulation, the *ordo disciplinae* describes Aquinas's commitment to approaching truth always as a student, and expounding it according to the same principle, that is, in a way that it is naturally acquired. This might seem humorous

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[84] Aquinas, *ST* I, prologue.

[85] Ibid.

[86] The term is usually used to indicate its contrast with *ordo doctrinae*—"order of the doctor," that is, order of the student vs. the instructor. In this case, Aquinas seems to be connecting *ordo disciplinae* with his dictum "as the matter allows" in the sense of the order of content being informed by the content itself, though there is no reason to assume Aquinas is excluding one meaning for the other.

[87] Aquinas, *De veritate*, II, 1; te Velde, *Aquinas*, 24.

to frustrated students of Aquinas in today's universities, but care should be taken not to impose our difficulties on his original audience. The *ordo disciplinae* also indicates that Aquinas is committed to connecting the parts as the parts themselves allow (*secundum quod materia patietur*).[88] This, however, though it tells us a little about how the *ST* is articulated, still leaves the question of what it is about the parts in Aquinas's system that inform how they are articulated. Thus, we turn to his idea of *sacra doctrina* to explore the deeper aspects of articulation in the *ST*.

<div align="center">The Articulation of the Parts as Sacra Doctrinae</div>

Whereas the *ordo disciplinae* describes how the *ST* was articulated specific to its target audience, the *sacra doctrinae* describes how the truths taught in the *ST* are articulated in themselves. At this level we are closest to the essence of the *ST*, which underlines the importance of caution in drawing conclusions. And though Aquinas doesn't ever say "sacred doctrine is articulated as such . . . ," he presents his expression of its system, and in so doing, he provides clues that assist in uncovering the principles of its articulation. Based on these clues there are actually several theories advanced in the secondary literature concerning the articulation of the *ST*, some stronger than others. Therefore, based on the foregoing material regarding the whole, the parts, and any other clues that are offered in the *ST*, each of the main theories from the secondary material is looked at separately, comparing each with the *ST* itself in terms of how well it represents the articulation of Aquinas's system.

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[88] Aquinas, *ST* I, prologue.

Sacra Doctrinae and Aristotelianism

In light of the fact that Aquinas's principle of *sacra doctrinae* includes "philosophical science built up by human reason," one possible source of articulation is the overall philosophy or at least the metaphysics of Aristotle. This view seemed to prevail in early twentieth-century assessments of Aquinas's work.[89] Certainly, Aquinas's appreciation for the contribution Aristotle makes to his own thought is without question.[90] In terms of articulation, however, the philosophy of Aristotle does not seem to play a significant role for three reasons.

To begin with, as a *theological* system, the material to be articulated is Christian theology, about which Aristotle has little to say. Therefore, with its emphases on the doctrines of the Trinity, sin, grace, etc., the *ST* could not be properly called an 'Aristotelian system.' Secondly, Aquinas's use of Aristotle is clearly selective, and he often refers to other 'authorities' in contradiction to Aristotle. So even if it were some kind of 'Aristotelian system of Christian theology,' where Christian doctrines were somehow explained by Aristotelian philosophy, Aristotle would have to be the source of all of Aquinas's "I answer that . . . ," which we know is not the case. Finally, and possibly most importantly, the principle of *sacra doctrinae* includes only philosophy (or

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[89] More specifically, it was popular till Gilson challenged it in more than one of his works (Mark D. Jordan, "The Alleged Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas," in *The Gilson Lectures on Thomas Aquinas* [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008], 73).

[90] Gilson, *History*, 363ff.; Grabmann, *Thomas Aquinas*, 53; Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, vii; Peiper, *Guide*, 39ff.; te Velde, *Aquinas*, 4; Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Aquinas's Summa: Background, Structure, and Reception*, trans. Benedict M. Guevin (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 11ff.

any other knowledge) insofar as it contributes to salvation, a criteria that is alien to Aristotelianism.[91]

Consequently, Aristotelian philosophy should not be considered a principle of articulation, at least not in a general sense. One might consider, however, that Aristotle could be a principle of articulation in the limited sense that particular concepts (being, essence, causality, etc.) subsumed within the articulation of the *ST* were clearly Aristotelian. But this view must be tempered by the statement, "philosophical science built up by reason" (*philosophicas disciplinas, quae ratione humana investigantur*) and what it implies, that is, that these are concepts available for general consumption as knowledge that human reason would inevitably have concluded even without Aristotle's help.[92]

This in mind, Aquinas's references to "the philosopher" should not imply a sense of reverence to Aristotle as the source of philosophy's highest truths, but rather, these epithets indicate his respect for Aristotle as a human being who was right about a lot of things, but all of which, though not always 'self-evident,' was available to any human being with enough intellect, desire, and time to pursue it.[93] And he demonstrates this in his use of his other favorite sources—Augustine, Plato, the Damascene, etc.—when Aristotle didn't get it right.

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[91] "The true reason why his [Aquinas's] conclusions were different from those of Aristotle was that his own principles themselves were different" (Gilson, *History*, 365). Later, Gilson is more specific, saying that "the unity of theology is that of an organic whole whose parts are united under one single formal reason [the salvation of man]" (Gilson, *History*, 367).

[92] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1.

Again, this is not to say that Aristotle plays only a minor role in Aquinas's thought and certainly not in the *ST*, on the contrary. [94] Rather, it should be remembered that, in spite of the foundational nature of Aristotle in the thought of Aquinas and the philosophy utilized by the *ST*, his system seems to reflect articulation from other sources, which is discussed below.

Sacra Doctrinae and the Four Causes[95]

In their preface, Pasnau and Shields express their objective to "introduce" Aquinas's "entire philosophical system."[96] They propose to do so by identifying and explaining "his overarching explanatory framework, . . . a four-causal explanatory schema" (that is, the *material, formal, efficient* and *final* causes).[97] And, with the doctrine of the four causes being "absolutely central to all of his philosophical thought; consequently, no genuine engagement with this philosophy is possible without a firm grounding in its principle commitments."[98] Therefore, this dissertation should not be an exception to this, so the above claim must be applied to any consideration of possible principles of articulation.

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[93] In contemporary theology this type of knowledge is sometimes called 'general revelation" which, as even Aquinas points out (Aquinas, *ST* II, q. 1, a. 6), is identified in Rom 1:19 as "that which is known of God is manifest in them [Gentiles]."

[94] Some argue that what has been said about Aquinas's dependence on Aristotle is an overstatement and that the historical tendency of referring to Aquinas as "Aristotelian" is a mistake and should be reconsidered (Peiper, *Guide*, 43). But, even in these views, Aquinas is not said to be anti-Aristotelian so much as he keeps Aristotle as a peer within a greater context of the dialogue of the "masters."

[95] This is similar to the previous option but more specific and has been suggested in this form recently. Therefore, it should be treated separately here.

[96] Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, vii.

[97] Ibid.

It is true that it would be difficult to overstate the importance of the four causes to a proper understanding of the *ST*.[99] Surely, any article of the *ST* can be discussed in terms of causality, whether Aquinas is explicit about the causal aspects of his answer or not. But how central is this schema to the overall articulation of the *ST*? In seeking an answer to this question, the Pasnau and Shields work does not provide an explanation to how the four causes articulates Aquinas's system.[100] Therefore, we must allow the *ST* to provide its own answers to this question.

Further, the language of causality saturates the *ST*, but as already noted, the *ST* is a theology, and as such, every causal relation in the *ST* is meant to fulfill the theologian's objective: salvific knowledge of the Universal, First and Final Cause—God, primarily; and the doctrine of causality secondarily.[101] Therefore, though a knowledge of the four causes is certainly helpful–if not crucial–in understanding the *logic*, that is, as an "explanatory framework" of the *ST*, referring to the four causes as "overarching" or "absolutely central" to it may be an overstatement. It should be remembered, however,

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[98] Ibid., 23.

[99] It should be noted that Aquinas does not provide a formal explanation of the four causes in the *ST* itself, though he refers to one or another of them quite often and refers to all four only once in response to one of his objections (Aquinas, *ST* II, q. 75, a. 4). However, he does provide a comprehensive explanation of the four causes in his *De principiis naturae*.

[100] Timothy McDermott, "The Single Causal Origin," appendix ii, in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 209ff.

[101] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 44, a. 1ff; McDermott, "Single Causal Origin," 209ff. In fact, this could possibly be the reason more causal terminology is missing in the *ST*. Due to his efforts to avoid introducing a 'terminology' that might eclipse the essence of his work—salvific knowledge, Aquinas limited his explanations to something closer to a 'street explanation,' a tendency he actually attributes to Aristotle (Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* I, q. 1, a. 2).

Pasnau and Shields were not applying this role to the *ST*, but to Aquinas's overall

philosophical thought.[102] And as such, the doctrines of the four causes could be

considered supporting principles in terms of articulation, but the search continues for a

principle or set of principles that provides a fuller explanation of the articulation of the *ST*

as a specific system of theology.

Sacra Doctrinae and Being

Another attractive possibility in explaining the articulation of the *ST* is the role of

the concept of 'being.' And certainly, from a philosophical perspective, being is

foundational, if not crucial to understanding the essence of the *ST*.[103] If the *ST* is telling

us that every thing that exists or can be thought has something in common with every

other thing, and with the whole universe, and with the First Cause of all of the above, this

definitely has to do with articulation. And, if Aquinas was intending a comprehensive

philosophical system of metaphysics, this might have been the principle of articulation

for such a work. As a theology, however, the *ST* seeks to go beyond merely explaining

how being is common to all beings, but more importantly, what Divine Being has

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[102] Interestingly, later in the work, Pasnau and Shields, still referring to Aquinas's "overall philosophical thought," actually come close to identifying what is being discussed here as a principle of articulation: "Aquinas advances this claim [union with God as final human end] as following from what he understands to be a now-established interlocking concatenation of facts concerning human nature, the divine essence, the relation between creatures and their creator, and the structure of the human will—facts all undergirded and supported by his general explanatory framework. Here, as in other divisions of inquiry, his remarkable systematicity is a sort of liability with dividends" (Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 197). Notice, in this context, the "explanatory framework" is not called "overarching," but "undergirding."

[103] "As a philosophy, Thomism is essentially a metaphysics. It is a revolution in the history of the metaphysical interpretation of the first principle, which is 'being'" (Gilson, *History*, 365).

revealed about being itself (*ipsum esse*).[104] And, in addition to what all things have in common, revealed knowledge explains what distinguishes things from each other, and what difference it makes, that is, how things should be and how that is brought about.[105]

Therefore, in spite of the pervasive nature of the concept of being in the *ST*, it could only be a principle of articulation with qualifications. And so the search for a principle that more completely fulfills the expectations of *sacra doctrinae* continues.

Sacra Doctrinae and *Circulatio*

Though he doesn't use the terminology of "articulation," Aquinas comes very close to identifying an "organizing principle" for *sacra doctrinae*: "All of sacred doctrine (*sacra doctrinae*), however, is treated under the principle, God (*pertractantur sub ratio Dei*): either because it is God himself, or because it is related to God (*habent ordinem ad Deum*), as its principle or end (*principium et finem*)."[106] Thus, early in the *ST* Aquinas suggests, in a general way, the organizing principle of *sacra doctrina* as God and his role as First and Final principle for all that is. This statement by itself, however, adds little more than the principles of causality and being, discussed above. This statement does however provide a clue to a more complex principle that provides the most plausible explanation for the articulation of the *sacra doctrinae*.

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[104] "God is not a particular being among others, not even the highest one: He is his being. One cannot speak of God as if He were 'this' or 'that'; He is, Thomas says quoting Dionysius, 'everything as the cause of everything' [Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 4, a. 1]. God is not one amidst others, particularized within the ommon space of being, but He is 'being itself' (*ipsum esse*). The way of *simplicitas* leads ultimately to the identity in God of essence and being" (te Velde, *Aquinas*, 79).

[105] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 47, a. 1ff.

Aquinas first identifies this principle in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, explaining that, "in the emergence of creatures from the First Principle, there is a kind of circulation" (*quod in exitu creaturarum a primo principio attenditur quaedam circulatio vel regiratio*).[107] Then, early in the *ST*, though without much expounding, Aquinas identifies this principle as the inevitable "conversion" (*convertitur*) of effects to their "principle."[108] Thus when, in the *sacra doctrina*, Aquinas adds the perspective of revelation to the foundational philosophical principles of being and causality, a genuinely new principle rises to view, that of *movement*. But this isn't just the general

[106] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 7; see also Chenu, *Aquinas*, 137: "Since theology is the 'science' (certain knowledge) of God, we have to study all things in their relation to God, whether with respect to their original production or to their final destiny."

[107] Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis*, lib. 1, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2. And in other works outside the *ST*: "The third reason is that it is desirable for each thing to be united to its principle, since it is in this that the perfection of each thing consists. This is also the reason why circular motion is the most perfect motion, as is proved in Book VIII of the Physica, because its terminus is united to its starting point. Now it is only by means of his intellect that man is united to the separate substances, which are the principles of the human intellect and that to which the human intellect is related as something imperfect to something perfect. It is for this reason, too, that the ultimate happiness of man consists in this union. Therefore man naturally desires to know" (Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, lib. 1, l. 1, n. 4); "An effect is most perfect when it returns to its principle; thus the circle is the most perfect of all figures, and circular motion the most perfect of all motions, because in their case a return is made to the beginning. It is therefore necessary that creatures return to their principle in order that the universe of creatures may attain its ultimate perfection" (Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* II, q. 46).

[108] "*…utpote ex principio bono existens, quia semper effectus convertitur in suum principium*" (Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 63, a. 4). Also, concerning Aquinas's use of this concept for the *ST*, see Jan Aertsen, *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988); idem, "The Circulation-Motive and Man in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas," in *L'Homme et son univers au moyen âge,* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1986), 1:432–439; idem, "Aquinas's Philosophy in Its Historical Setting," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 16; Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Introduction à l'étude de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Montreal: Institute d'études Médiévales, 1993), 266ff.; Peiper, *Guide*, 101; te Velde, *Aquinas*, 11ff.; Torrell, *Aquinas's Summa*, 27.

philosophical concept of movement, but rather a certain type of movement, the *circulatio*, which, to Aquinas, should explain the articulation of both the ontological system of the universe and the *sacra doctrina*.[109]

More specifically, Aquinas's concept of the *circulatio* describes reality-in-time in two phases of movement, "the double dynamics from the origin and towards the origin":[110] the "proceeding" (*exitus*) of all that is from its source, the First Cause; and the "returning" (*reditus*) of all to its final end, the Good.[111] But these two phases are united

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[109] "The structural outline of the *Summa Theologica* is a mirror of the structural outline of reality. It begins in God, Who is 'in the beginning.' It then proceeds to the act of creation and a consideration of creatures, centering on man, who alone is created in the image of God. Then it moves to man's return to God through his life of moral and religious choice, and culminates in the way or means to that end: Christ and His Church. Thus the overall scheme of the *Summa*, like that of the universe, is an *exitus-redditus*, an exit from and a return to God, who is both Alpha and Omega. God is the ontological heart that pumps the blood of being through the arteries of creation into the body of the universe, which wears a human face, and receives it back through the veins of man's life of love and will. The structure of the *Summa*, and of the universe, is dynamic. It is not like information in a library, but like blood in a body" (Kreeft, *A Summa*, 15).

[110] Aertsen, *Nature and Creature*, 42.

[111] "This emanation [of *beings* from *Being*] may be characterized by a step by step descent which manifests itself in an even greater diverseness from the One. Yet, simultaneously there is a return to the origin, which is a turning back, or 'conversion.' All that is emanated reverts, in accordance with its nature, upon that from which it has originated, the Good. For in the likeness to that lies the perfection of everything" (Aertsen, *Nature and Creature*, 41); "Thomas adopted the great Platonic theme of emanation and return" (Chenu, *Aquinas*, 137); ". . . the outpouring of reality out of the divine Source, which by necessity contains within its initial stages the state of being on the way back to the same Source, with the Creator Who in Christ has become one with the creation revealing Himself as the Way of this return" (Peiper, *Guide*, 101); "This fact [God as beginning and end of all things] is expressed by the circularity of the causal constitution of finite being: the whole of reality is conceived of as a pluriform and differentiated order of being which emerges from the one single source and which seeks for inner unification and perfection by returning to that source. Thomas essentially shares this metaphysical view of reality as dynamically stretched out between the first principle and the ultimate goal, the principle of *being* and the principle of the *good*, which coincide in God" (te Velde, *Aquinas*, 11 [Interestingly, this description is not of te Velde's own view, but the view he wishes to contend with, how successfully, however, is

152

in their ground, Being, who is the cause of both phases, the Alpha and Omega.[112] Then, "it is necessary, in order to bring about the completion of the work of theology" and, inasmuch as the *sacra doctrina* is meant to be *salvific*, it was also necessary to discuss the way in which this can be accomplished for fallen beings, Christ.[113] Thus, every part of Aquinas's system can be articulated under the principle of *sacra doctrina* as *circulatio*.

Here it should be noted that the *circulatio*, in addition to its other aspects, is an existential principle, which describes the articulation of all-that-is as an existential whole: "Thinking the truth of God demands that the whole of reality is taken into consideration, since it is only in reference to the whole of reality that God, as its comprehensive principle and ground, can be thought."[114] By articulating the whole of reality, however,

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beyond the scope of this chapter.]); "At the very beginning, Thomas tells us that he wants to speak of God as the source and end of all creatures. This fundamental fact, which governs the entire organization of the *Summa*, is like a subterranean current that unifies, by tying together, the three parts and their multiple treatises. There is a structure underlying this multiplicity: the work is in fact constructed according to a circular plan that draws the reader into the 'going-out-from-returning-to' (*exitus-reditus*) movement which is that of the entire universe, coming from God its creator and returning to him as its final end" (Torrell, *Aquinas's Summa*, 27–28).

[112] Richard J. Regan, Brian Davies, and Thomas Aquinas, "Introduction," in *On Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 51.

[113] "*necesse est ut, ad consummationem totius theologici negotii*" (Aquinas, *ST* III, prologue); Peiper, *Guide*, 101.

[114] te Velde, *Aquinas*, 3. It is also interesting to note that, especially among his French commentators, the *ST* is considered a philosophy of existence: "In the mind of Thomas Aquinas, the notion of being underwent a remarkable transformation. . . . The deepest meaning of the word 'being' [to Aquinas] will be the act pointed out by the verb 'to be.' Since, in common human experience, to be is to exist, it can be said that, in the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, being has received the fullness of its existential meaning. In order to avoid all possible confusions with some modern uses of the word 'existence,' let us add that, in every being, 'to be,' or *esse*, is not to become; it is not any kind of projection from the present into the future. On the contrary, because it is act, 'to be' is something fixed and at rest in being: *esse est aliquid fixum et quietum in ente*. In short, this act is the very core of all that is, inasmuch precisely as what is, is a being" (Gilson, *History*, 368).

implies both the stuff (material) and duration (temporal) aspects of reality in terms of *history*.[115]

Of course much of this seems to be describing the articulation of the ontological system of the universe and time, which the *ST* is addressing, but it is not difficult to see that, while the reality of *circulatio* articulates the universe, the principle of *circulatio* articulates Aquinas's cognitive system. Thus, in addition to the articulation of the universe and time, the *circulatio* unites the parts, questions, and articles of what Aquinas puts to page.

However, even though there is a sense of the "plan of the book"—parts I, II, and III–following the *circulatio*, it cannot be imposed too literally upon Aquinas's table of contents.[116] Thus, "if we wish to reproduce adequately the structure of the *Summa*, we

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[115] "But it also proves to be open to history, in contrast to the determinism of the Greeks, by situating the facts and events of sacred history within the trajectory of emanation and return" (Chenu, *Aquinas*, 137); "Its [the *ST*'s] structure attempts to express the structure of reality as a Whole. 'Reality' is at bottom not a static state, but happening, dynamics–in more precise language, history, which means even permeated by spirit and flowing out of freedom. Every systematic examination of the Whole has its dubious aspects, of course; there is danger that this historical nature of reality will be reduced to the vanishing point by the formalistic structure of concepts and theses. But the brilliance of St. Thomas' *Summa theologica*, the quality which makes it a work of genius, is precisely that it avoids this danger. It succeeds in linking history *and* system, in projecting the nature of reality as happening *within* the orderly structure of ideas" (Peiper, *Guide*, 101); "In a surprising way, there appear here, in strict correspondence with one another, the origin and end of *history*, the source and the completion of *being*, the first and last cause of *understanding*, so that not only can theology turn itself into a 'science' of the history of salvation, but the *history of salvation itself bears within itself the fundamental theological design*. It is not therefore, according to Thomas, the theologian who brings order into the tangled events of salvation, but it is the order of salvation that structures theology" (Max Seckler, *Le salut et l'histoire. La pensée de saint Thomas d'Aquin sur la théologie de l'histoire* [Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967], quoted in Jean-Pierre Torrell, in *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Vol. 1, The Person and His Work* [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005], 151).

[116] Among the scholars who agree about the organizing role of the *circulatio*, there seems to be disagreement about how this can be applied to the tri-part structure (te Velde,

154

cannot, as in an outline, write the titles of its three parts one under the other. We must

rather arrange them in a circular diagram, in a ring returning back upon itself."[117] This

can be demonstrated by figure 5.

God
Being   Good
First   Final
Principle

EXITUS

REDITUS

emanation

participatio

beatific vision

privatio

Christ
incarnation
sacraments
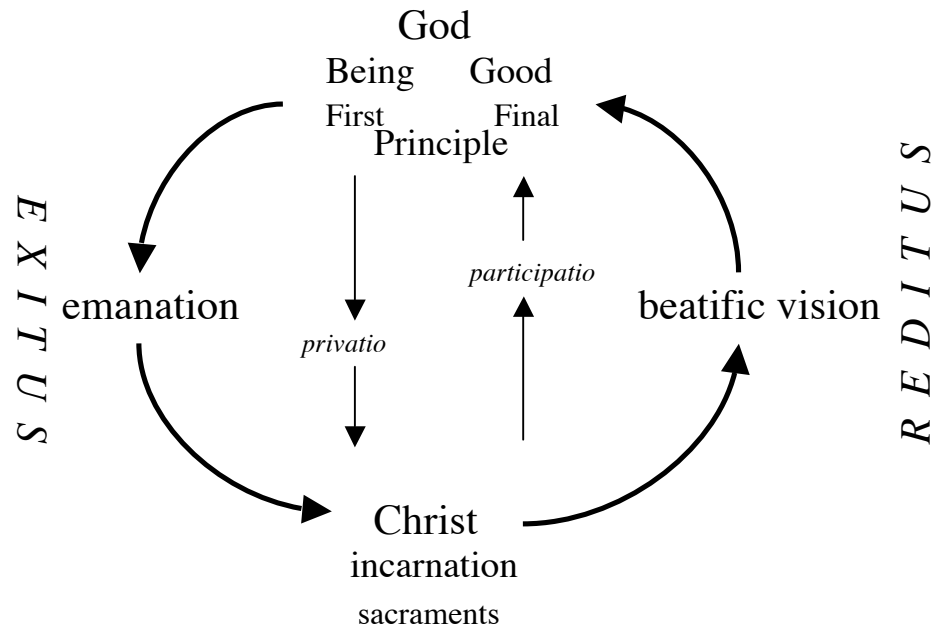
Figure 5. *Sacra Doctrina* as *circulatio*.

The words at the top of the diagram really all represent the same thing, God,

Being, the Good, the final and first principle. This point on the circle is the origin and

end of the movement of *circulatio*. The left side of the circle represents the *exitus*, the

movement away from the origin, the emanation; while the right side of the circle is the

Aquinas, 9ff.; Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 150ff.). But does the fact that the
circulatio or *exitus-reditus* model doesn't transfer directly to the table of contents of the
ST really imply that it can't be the organizing principle? One wonders whether a
theologian has ever been able to connect the parts of their system identically in the levels
of presentation as in the deeper levels of articulation.

[117] Peiper, *Guide*, 101.

reditus, the returning to the origin as its end. For human beings, that end is perfect

happiness (*beatudo*), found in final union with God, the beatific vision. At the bottom of

the circle is the *means* that make the *reditus* possible—Christ, the incarnation, and the

sacraments. Finally, in the middle of the circle are the concepts of privation (*privatio*)

and participation (*participatio*), which describe how, according to where a person or

thing is in the *circulatio*, they represent different degrees of depravation and participation

in Being and Divinity, which is discussed further below.

From this diagram, a couple considerations require attention. First, it should be

noticed that the arrangement/connection of the parts is not in what might be expected as a

logical order, in which the parts are connected as a deductive chain of validation. Rather,

all of the parts are linked according to a narrative order, in which they are arranged or

connected according to the existential or in-time correlations proper to history.[118] But, as

a textbook of theology and a cognitive system, this existential framework is not initially

visible in the *ST*. However, much like a tapestry has the appearance of any normal cloth

when observed closely but reveals an elaborate 'painting' when viewed from farther

back, the *ST*, when understood as the whole that is expected, reveals the narrative of the

circulatio.[119]

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[118] "Although Aquinas does not write narrative theology, he inscribes all discourse, ethical and metaphysical, within the narrative of redemption, whose history pivots on the Word becoming flesh and embracing the death of an outcast" (Thomas S. Hibbs, *Aquinas, Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion: Metaphysics and Practice* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007], 169); see also Aquinas (*Scriptum super Sententiis*, lib. 1, d. 5), where he suggests that the human intellect prefers, in terms similar to his principle of *ordo disciplinae*, a "narrative of signs" to facilitate the confirmation of faith (*oportet etiam quod modus istius scientiae sit narrativus signorum quae ad confirmationum fidei faciunt*).

[119] "The order, meaning, and systematic coherence of the intelligible structures are not immediately graspable, because Thomas's writings are often constructed according to

Secondly, in describing the 'moving away from' and 'towards' of the creatures in respect to the Creator, Aquinas uses the concepts of "deprivation" and "participation" in inverse proportion. As a sub-principle of the *circulatio*, this is helpful in understanding how things in apparent conflict or contradiction can be joined in a universal system. In other words, as things stand further from God, they are said to have a greater depravation of being (and goodness), which is Aquinas's definition of evil.[120] However, the same things can be thought of in terms of their closeness to God in that all things participate in His Being, though in different degrees.[121] In fact, inasmuch as evil is, by definition, "nothing," it is only the 'lack' of being and as such can never consume anything and thus, evil can never dis-integrate the system.[122] Therefore, taking the diversity of things, evil, and sin, all into account, Aquinas is able to unite all of reality, time, and theology into a single dynamic principle, the *circulatio*.

Before moving on to the conclusions, it is admitted that there are more intricate issues such as the role of the incarnation, beatific vision, etc., involved in the principle of *circulatio*, which could command more of our attention and yield a deeper understanding of how this principle articulates Aquinas's system. For purposes here, however, it should be enough to point out how this principle accounts for the articulation of all of the parts

the so-called 'scholastic' method. . . . It is 'piecework', from which an imposing edifice is built up 'summarily.' A systematic exposition of the foundations and joints is only seldom presented expressly. One who would understand Thomas must go in quest of these, must wonder what the fundamentals and the ruling principles of the architechtonic are" (Aertsen, *Nature and Creature*, 1).

[120] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 48; *ST* I, q. 64.

[121] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 44, a. 1.

[122] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 48.

of the *ST* as a system. Further, this should be adequate to facilitate comparison with other systems in terms of architectonic analysis.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter Aquinas's *ST* has served as a case study for the architectonic analysis introduced in chapter 2 as an instrument to analyze and compare systems of theology. After determining the suitability of the *ST* as a "system" to be analyzed, its aspects of whole, parts, and articulation were addressed in detail. In the sections on the whole and parts it was shown that the *ST* is best understood in the dual-aspects of system as structure (the *sacra doctrinae*) and system as process (the *ordo disciplinae*). As a structure, the whole to be expected is a comprehensive body of Christian doctrines that are at least partially informed by philosophical principles. Also, these doctrines make up the necessary parts to the cognitive structure of the *ST*, with some of them being independent founding principles while others are dependent supporting doctrines.

In terms of articulation the dual-aspects of the *ST* again come into play in that, in order to achieve the teleological principle of the whole—the salvation of all humans— and to represent in a cognitive structure the ontological system of all-that-is, it was argued that Aquinas utilized the idea of *circulatio*. Thus it was shown that this principle can account for the articulation of both the structure and process aspects of the *ST* as a cognitive theological system.

Before moving on to another case study, however, the *ST* has raised some issues which require attention. First, there is the possibility that in consideration of an instrument of analysis, the Thomist/Aristotelian doctrine of the four causes might be helpful. And, admittedly, a specific study in the use of the four causes in analyzing

158

systems would be interesting to say the least. In accordance with the limitations of this dissertation, however, it has been excluded from the instrument used here in the architectonic analysis because the theologians and philosophers who speak about "system" did not see fit to include causality in their discussions. Undoubtedly, this is mostly due to the profound effect Hume's critique had on subsequent thought, at least to the extent that causality was restricted, epistemologically, to the realm of metaphysics.[123] It should also be remembered that, to an extent, the concept of system can subsume much of Aristotelian thought without direct reference to Aristotle or his works.[124]

Another issue that should be discussed is the similarities that could be pointed out between Aquinas's system and the systems of Keckermann and Hegel, but for different reasons. Beginning with Keckermann's system, the first similarity is found in the fact that both Aquinas and Keckermann explicitly call their work an improvement on the pedagogical methods of their time. Of course, this is not a significant similarity in that these two were not the only theologians to attempt to improve the pedagogy of their time. But it is worth noting to the extent that it is helpful to see that they share in motive in the construction of their respective systems.

If we look deeper, however, Aquinas and Keckermann share a more integral element. Specifically, Aquinas's principle of *circulatio* seems to have a lot in common with Keckermann's organizing principles in his *Systema SS. Theologiae*. Based on the same teleological principle, salvation, Keckermann, like Aquinas, connects his parts

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[123] Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, ed. Gary Hatfield (Cambridge: Univeristy of Cambridge Press, 1997), 10ff.

[124] See chapter 2, pp. 32ff.

according to a salvation-history model of the movement from the fallen condition

towards humanity's proper end, salvation (*salutis*).[125]

These similarities, however, help to highlight the rather important difference

between the principles organizing these two great systems. Possibly a notable

characteristic of the Reformation and Protestant method in general, and significantly in

Keckermann's system, is that sin marks a profound disconnect in the movement of time.

As such, Keckermann makes this overall movement more of a square than a circle, with

creation being completely undone by sin and Christ being the only hope for salvation.

See fig. 6.

God

Creation   Restoration

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

SIN   the FALL   salvation   CHRIST

← T I M E →

Figure 6. Process of Keckermann's system.

In contrast to this, the *ST* portrays a smooth circular motion from *emanation* to the

beatific vision, with sin being an almost natural element of this movement, and Christ

being merely the "better means" to an inevitable end.[126]

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[125] Keckermann, *Systema SS. Theologiae*, 5ff.

[126] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1.

Thus, in a way, though similarities abound, Keckermann seems to be recasting the scholastic model of the *summa* in Protestant terms and articulating it with Protestant organizing principles. In terms of comprehensiveness and systematicity, however, Keckermann's *Systema SS. Theologiae* is clearly within the methodological/systematic tradition of the *ST*. But Keckermann gives this tradition a name: system. And as shown in the second chapter, this name found considerable popularity, at least for several centuries.

With Hegel's system, the similarities are not so visible but possibly more integral to the articulation of each. Specifically, both Hegel and Aquinas attempt to show a pervasive unity of everything, including God, the universe, and the self. Aquinas does this through the concept of being, Hegel through his concept of the absolute, though it could be argued that the difference between the two is merely in the terms each used. But where this architectonic analysis reveals the intersect between these two great systems, not only do we see their similar attempts at a viable monism, but more importantly, that they both do it as a process of existence. Of course, Aquinas could never be successfully accused of seeing God in process or time, but His effects in the circular motion of all that is, from Him and back to Him, are clearly in time and process, and significantly the whole. And though the nuances in the difference between Hegel's and Aquinas's processes of existence and the role/place of the divine in each are beyond the objectives of this chapter, the similarity should cause notice.

Finally, before moving on to Barth, one further consideration should be addressed. If the *circulatio* is confirmed as the primary principle of articulation in the *ST*, this cannot be done without the recognition of this being a compound principle which

161

includes the ideas of being, causality, and the *analogia entis* discussed above. In fact, it

seems equally important that these principles should be understood as necessary parts of

the compound principle of *circulatio*. But there does not seem to be any attempts in the

ST to confirm or establish these principles. Rather, they seem to be expected to be taken

as givens or axioms much like what Aquinas referred to as "self-evident" (*principiis per*

se notis) but which nevertheless are meant to be accepted without question. These

principles reiterate the condition pointed out, either explicitly or implied, by

Malebranche, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, and in the next chapter taken up by

Barth, that systems require transcendental elements that afford some type of

insider/outsider perspective linking this particular system to something beyond it.

Consequently, this transcendental element should be considered as a possible condition to

be required in anything called a theological system, which would impose further

precision in my definition of system as it is used in theology.

CHAPTER 4

ARCHITECTONIC ANALYSIS OF KARL

BARTH'S *CHURCH DOGMATICS*

In the previous chapter, the architectonic analysis (introduced in the second

chapter) was applied to St. Thomas Aquinas's *ST* to demonstrate the function of the idea

of system in a specific example. In this chapter, the architectonic analysis is applied to

Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* for the same purpose. Thus, the four questions of that

instrument[1] which were addressed to the *ST* in the previous chapter are posed to the

Church Dogmatics here.[2]

Like the *ST*, the *CD* was chosen for this study for specific reasons regarding its

appropriateness to demonstrate the architectonic analysis. First, like the *ST*, the *CD* is

regarded as among the greatest works of theology in the history of the discipline.[3] Also

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[1] Systematicity: Is the work in consideration a cognitive theological system? Whole: What expectation is to be fulfilled by this system? Parts: What are the nature and role(s) of the parts of this system? Articulation: What is/are the principle(s) of articulation in the internal structure of this system?

[2] Hereafter *CD*.

[3] "Although Barth began to give systematic formulation to this 'churchly character [Kirchlichkeit]' of dogmatics in his *Prolegomena to Christian Dogmatics*, that title soon yielded to *Church Dogmatics* [*Kirchliche Dogmatik*], becoming in the process the most monumental Protestant systematic theology since Calvin's *Institutes of Christian Religion*" (Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture*, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine 5 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991], 299–300); "probably the most significant theological achievement

as the *ST* is considered representative of Roman Catholic theology, the *CD* is certainly

representative of key elements of both Modern and Postmodern Protestant theology.[4]

Finally, whereas the *ST* was published before the term "system" had been incorporated

into theological dialogue, in the *CD* Barth openly opposes the construction of systems of

theology and asserts that his own work is not intended to be a system.[5] Thus, based on

these criteria, the *CD* should be an interesting case study for the architectonic analysis.

Also, like the *ST*, the *CD* is part of an ongoing development in Barth's overall

thought which might yield an interesting analysis as a system itself. However, it should

be remembered that this analysis is limited to and focused on the specific written work,

the *CD*, as a cognitive system.   And the ontological realities referred to by Barth, such as

his perception of the Trinity or his Christology, would prove to be lively candidates for

this analysis as well. But the *CD* is here being analyzed as a cognitive whole and, as

such, the ontological systems mentioned therein are only discussed to the extent that they

facilitate an understanding of the *CD* as a cognitive system.

<div align="center">

**Systematicity: Is the *Church Dogmatics*
a Cognitive Theological System?**

</div>

One of the most conspicuous aspects of the *CD* is Barth's persistent anti-system

rhetoric. In fact, other than Lambert, there are probably few theologians who speak of

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of the twentieth century" (Alister E. McGrath, *An Introduction to Christianity* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], 329).

[4] "Thus Barth as an acknowledged heir of the Reformation has contributed essentially to the rediscovery of the theology of Luther and Calvin which is such a feature of the modern epoch of Protestant theology, and yet, although often chided for his orthodoxy, he has powerfully opposed every orthodox repristination" (Karl Barth and Helmut Gollwitzer, *Barth's Church Dogmatics*, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley [London: Continuum International, 1985], 7).

system more than Barth. In fact, in the four volumes with over 3,500 pages, Barth uses the word "system" or one of its derivatives ("systematic," "systematize," etc.) at least 699 times.[6] Of these statements, however, only a handful are not negative or critical of the idea. Specifically, Barth argues that theology should not be expressed in the form of a "system" in that its subject matter (God, Jesus, the Word, reconciliation, etc.) is not compatible with that form.[7] Of course this is a simple description of a complex aspect of Barth's overall thought, which is addressed more fully below. For now, suffice it to say that Barth clearly does not consider the *CD* an example of a proper system of theology, according to his definition of this term. Therefore, at this point, Barth's definition of "system" should be compared with the intensional definition provided in chapter 2.

Barth's Definition of "System"

Understanding Barth's objection to system(s) is actually fundamental to his overall thought. In fact, it could be said that Barth's whole *CD* is an 'anti-systematic theology.' However, this might seem disingenuous in view of the monumental, and yes, even "systematic" structure of the *CD*. Therefore, the purpose of this subsection is to distinguish between what Barth has constructed with his *CD* and what he considers a "theological system."

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[5] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 868–869.

[6] Based on search results in the online database provided by Alexander Street Press: http://solomon.dkbl.alexanderstreet.com (accessed March 31, 2010), using the search term "system" in both the English and German versions of the *CD*.

[7] Karl Barth, *CD*, vol. I-1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, trans. G. W. Bromily and T. F. Torrence (1969), 79; 139; Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 861–862, 868; Karl Barth, *CD*, vol. III-3, *The Doctrine of Creation, Part 3*, trans. G. W. Bromily and T. F. Torrence (1976), 293; Karl Barth, *CD*, vol. IV-3, *The Doctrine of*

As indicated above, in the majority of Barth's statements involving the term, he is careful to explain why he disapproves of the form of system for a responsible dogmatics. And from those statements, it is not difficult to abstract an accurate idea of his definition of this term. In his first explicit statement about system in the *CD*, Barth argues that, due to the human condition,[8] "dogmatic work cannot claim more than a gymnastic character [*gymnastischen Charakter*]. It is *pars pro toto* ["only part of the whole"]. As may be stated already, it cannot aim to be a system of Christian truth."[9]

Unfortunately, the above statement does not actually provide much in terms of Barth's definition of system. However, in a couple other statements, Barth provides rather explicit definitions of system as he sees it. The first is in the second part of the first volume of the *CD*:

> As understood by all those who in philosophy and theology have attempted and created something of the kind, 'system' means a structure of principles and their consequences, founded on the presupposition of a basic view of things, constructed with the help of various sources of knowledge and axioms, and self-contained and complete in itself.[10]

And this statement can be broken down into the following elements in accordance with the definition provided in chapter 2: System means: (1) "a structure of principles and their consequences" (the parts), (2) "constructed with the help of various sources of

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Reconciliation, Part 3, trans. G. W. Bromily and T. F. Torrence (1988), 375–376. Each of these statements is addressed in more detail below.

[8] The 'human condition' is actually a formative element in Barth's system and is addressed more fully below.

[9] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 79. Interestingly, it is not clear what Barth is referring to in his statement, "as may be stated already." This is the first time he speaks directly about the appropriateness of theology as a "system," but he might be saying "may" because he couldn't remember if he had already discussed this in this work or he might be referring to one of his previously published works.

[10] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 861.

knowledge and axioms" (articulation), and (3) "self-contained and complete in itself" (the whole).

Here it is shown that Barth's definition, at least roughly, follows the definition provided in chapter 2. However, if the phrase, "founded on the presupposition of a basic view of things," is included, Barth's definition poses a problem. This is due to the fact that, according to the above statement and its pericope, a dogmatic system must be articulated according to this "basic view of things" (*Grundanschauung*) and with the help of "sources of knowledge and axioms" all of which are in direct conflict with the subject matter of Christian dogmatics, "the Word of God."[11] Therefore, to Barth, the content of Christian dogma cannot be framed or expressed in the form of a system, which raises the question here whether the *CD* can be considered a system. Before answering that question, however, it is necessary to look at Barth's other explicit definition of system.

In the preface (March 1959) to the Torchbook edition of his *Dogmatics in Outline*, Barth states that "a 'system' is an edifice of thought, constructed on certain fundamental conceptions which are selected in accordance with a certain philosophy by a method which corresponds to these conceptions."[12] And, as above, this statement can be broken down into the following elements in accordance with the definition provided in chapter 2: A system is: (1) "an edifice of thought" (whole with parts implied), (2) "certain fundamental conceptions" (principles of articulation), and (3) "constructed . . . by a method which corresponds to these conceptions" (process of articulation).

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[11] What Barth means by these statements is discussed in more detail below. For the purposes of this section they are identified as the elements Barth is introducing that limit the definition provided in chapter two.

[12] Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, trans. G. T. Thomson (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 5.

Notice, again, that a phrase was omitted ("which are selected in accordance with a certain philosophy") where Barth again narrows the definition considerably. According to this, a cognitive theological system can never be more than merely an annex to a larger structure of philosophy. To Barth, the only way for theology to be its own system would be if it were able to draw its principles of articulation from its own subject matter.[13] But due to the special nature of "its (Christian theology's) own principle" ("Jesus Christ"/"the word of God") it is not available in the form of a 'principle,' and, hence, to Barth, "there can be no dogmatic system."[14]

Consequently, from his two most explicit definitions, Barth qualifies the meaning of system in theology by adding the condition that the content of such a system cannot be

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[13] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 6. "Any science is determined by its subject-matter. In the case of theology, this subject-matter cannot be conceived as object, but as subject, and this changes all the rules of ordinary academic disciplines" (Christoph Schwöbel, "Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Webster [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 23).

[14] "Theology cannot be carried on in confinement or under the pressure of such a construction. The subject of theology is the history of the communion of God with man and of man with God. This history is proclaimed, in ancient times and today, in the Old and New Testaments. The message of the Christian Church has its origin and its contents in this history. The subject of theology is, in this sense, the 'Word of God'" (Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 5). "In dogmatic systems the presupposed basic view acquires inevitably the position and function which according to all our previous considerations can be ascribed only to the Word of God. But the Word of God may not be replaced even vicariously by any basic interpretation of the 'essence of Christianity', however pregnant, deep and well founded. The simple reason for this is that while its content is indeed the truth, it is the truth of the reality of the work and activity of God taking place within it. As such it is not to be condensed and summarized in any view, or idea, or principle. It can only be reported concretely, i.e., in relation to what is at any given time the most recent stage of the process or action or sovereign act of which it is the occurrence. . . . If, then, there is no *a priori* basic view in dogmatics, but, as its foundation and centre, only the Word of God, which presupposes itself and proves itself by the power of its content, it is quite evident that there can be no dogmatic system. Rightly understood, it is the material principle of dogmatics itself, which destroys at its root the very notion of a dogmatic system. Where there is no longer a secure platform for thinking and speaking, there is likewise no system" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 862, 868).

accessible to humans. But, as he points out, this has not stopped people from describing or constructing those systems, only that it exposes the fact that those systems cannot truly represent their subject—God. In other words, according to Barth's definition of system, anything called a "theological system" is either not theological or not a system. And if we were to stop here, we would have to dismiss Barth from this analysis since he himself insisted that his dogmatics, inasmuch as it is an attempt to be faithful to its theological content, is not a system.

Interestingly, however, Barth himself confesses that this realization of its impossibility doesn't eliminate system as a by-product or "spontaneous" phenomenon when dogmatics strives for "definiteness and coherence":

> In this work—it cannot be otherwise in view of its object—we have to do with the question of truth. It is, therefore, inevitable that as a whole and in detail the aim must be definiteness and coherence, and it is to be hoped that the definiteness and sequence of the truth will actually be disclosed. But this being the case, is it not also inevitable that "something like a system" will assert itself more or less spontaneously in dogmatic work? Why, then, should a "system" be so utterly abhorrent? If it asserts itself spontaneously in this way, can it not be forgiven? And if so, why should we be frightened away by a law forbidding systems? May it not be that a "system" which asserts itself spontaneously (not as a system, but as a striving for definiteness and coherence) signifies obedience and is therefore a shadow of the truth?[15]

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[15] Ibid., 868–869. "What about system? Barth has two counterbalancing thoughts here. System is to be avoided in the sense of focusing on a specific article or articles, with a clear-cut distinction between the basic and the non-basic. It militates against the freedom of obedience, not allowing the Word itself to be truly basic and central. Nevertheless, this does not rule out a systematic or architectonic handling either of the whole or of specific doctrines. If it did, Barth would come under his own criticisms, for *Church Dogmatics* and its individual volumes give ample evidence of careful planning and balanced structuring. Barth's point is that since the Word constitutes the norm and core, the dogmatician can find no outside platform from which to survey the field. Instead, he is under the direction of the Word and in authentic freedom of obedience he will work out his dogmatics in the form of *loci* or tenets which do not proceed from a higher unity or express a transcendent synthesis, but simply arise out of the Word itself" (G. C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], 50).

But he immediately cautions that this phenomenon is 'unauthorized' and 'dangerous' as something one might call a 'necessary evil.'[16]

In fact, in reaction to criticism of "his system" in *Der Römerbrief*, Barth indicates that he may not be able to avoid something like a system coming through in his work, but quickly adds:

> If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the "infinite qualitative distinction" between time and eternity, and to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance: "God is in heaven, and thou art on earth." The relation between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy.[17]

Ironically, however, the principle he refers to here is his insistence that this "infinite qualitative distinction" between his so-called "system" and its content (the Word of God) annihilates its comprehensibility as such (that is, as a system).[18] Furthermore, it should

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[16] "It may well be so. But even in this case the danger is still there. The fact that unauthorized systematization may be forgiven does not mean that the tendency to systematization is authorized. Nor does the fact that even in the fatal form of an intrinsically unauthorized systematization true obedience may finally be demonstrated and a shadow of the truth disclosed" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 869). See also, Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. John Drury (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winstson, 1971), 171: "Later, to be sure, Barth would reject the possibility of strict systematization in theology and opt for open-endedness. But systematization is not the same as the thrust and orientation and style of one's thought, and Barth was 'systematic' in the later sense."

[17] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 10. Also, "In both its investigations and its conclusions it [dogmatics] must keep in view that God is in heaven and it on earth, and that God, His revelation and faith always live their own free life over against all human talk, including that of the best dogmatics" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 85–86).

[18] "Faith is not a foundation upon which men can emplace themselves; not an atmosphere in which they can breathe; not a system under which they can arrange their lives. Regarded from our human point of view, what was once religion and law and a method of life becomes anarchy and a void and an abyss. But the *law of the faithfulness of God*, or, what is the same thing as the *law of faith*, is the place where we are

be remembered that, to Kierkegaard, there is nothing wrong with 'striving', as long as we remember that "God is in heaven, and thou art on earth" and that, to God, all of existence (the ontological system of reality in space and time) and the knowledge thereof (cognitive systems) is a system, but to those of us who exist, it can never be so.[19]

Thus, Barth does not deny the possibility of creating something called a system of theology, or even his own 'striving' to articulate his dogmatics according to a cognitive principle. What he rejects is the possibility of actually capturing the essential content of such a system in the form of a system, thus rendering any product of such an endeavor suspect. More specifically, Barth seems to be denying the viability of a cognitive theological system, articulated by "principles," a "basic view of things," "philosophy," etc., which is not compatible—in that form—with the content of Christian theology.[20]

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established by God. There there [*sic*] is nothing but God Himself, God only; and there the place is no place; for it is the 'Moment' when men are moved by God, by the true God, the Creator and Redeemer of men and of all human things; the 'Moment' when men surrender themselves and all that they are to God. The 'Moment' of the movement of men by God is beyond men, it cannot be enclosed in a system or a method or a 'way'. It rests in the good pleasure of God, and its occasion is to be sought and found only in Him. *The law of the spirit of life* (Rom. 8:2) is the point of view—which is no point of view!—by which all human boasting is *excluded*" (Barth, *Romans*, 110). Here caution should be observed in that Barth has made statements suggesting that some of his views in the *Epistle to the Romans* have changed and because of this, that work is not a valid candidate for evidence in this argument. And, though it appears that he has undergone some development in this regard, it does not appear to affect the aspect discussed here regarding the possibility of the revelation of the Word of God being understood as a system.

[19] "Existence itself is a system–for God; but it cannot be a system for any existing spirit" (Kierkegaard, *Concluding*, 201).

[20] "The whole and its parts (the unity of the totality) would thus be subject to rational apperception, explanation, and formalization. But (if anything) only concepts and principles, not persons and histories, could be systematized in this way, to say nothing of a mysterious person available to us only by way of a miraculous history, as Jesus Christ is affirmed to be by faith" (George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991], 53).

However, based on the distinction made in chapter 2 regarding cognitive vs. ontological

systems, his version of the content of Christian dogma seems to fall into the realm of the

real and as such may be covered by the definition provided.[21] Remember, to Barth, the

content of dogma, "the Church's talk about God,"[22] is an ontological whole—

whether as "Moment,"[23] "event,"[24] "the history of the communion of God with man and

of man with God,"[25] or "the being of the Church."[26] And, even if it cannot be confined to

a cognitive system, this does not preclude the possibility—or even benefit—of

constructing a cognitive system about the ontological whole it arises from.[27] Therefore,

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[21] Here it should be noted that Barth explicitly distinguishes the reality of God as the subject of dogmatics from his effects in created reality which is addressed further below: "God's omnipotence is the omnipotence of His free love, which is not as such identical with any system or order of His works and from which we must not abstract if there is to be serious discussion of the system and order of His works. In His works we are concerned with His activity and therefore with Himself. But apart from the revelation of the particular and proper omnipotence of God, which is not exhausted by His omnicausality, the omnipotence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, all that we can and will enjoy and experience in so-called reality, in what is supposed to be the divine order of the world (including the so-called order of salvation), is not God's omnicausality, but merely a vast flood of unrealities, of revelations of the power of impotence, of demonic forces, and therefore of impossibilities of every kind" (Karl Barth, *CD*, vol. II-1, *The Doctrine of God, Part 1*, trans. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrence [2004], 531).

[22] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 6.

[23] Barth, *Romans*, 110.

[24] "A system of Christian truth can be the task of dogmatics only to the extent that we are dealing with Christian truth that is proclaimed and is to be proclaimed, so that the exposition of it is less a system than the report of an event" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 280).

[25] Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 5.

[26] "To be sure, attempts have always been made on all sides to criticize (in the sense of critique) and correct the Church's talk about God. But what is required is its criticism and correction in the light of the being of the Church, of Jesus Christ as its basis, goal and content" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 6).

[27] "If here, as everywhere, we allow Christ to be the centre, the starting-point and the finishing point, we have no reason to fear that there will be any lack of unity and

Barth's denial of theological systems must be qualified as more of a distinction being

made between the cognitive "gymnastics" used to talk about God and the *Being*[28] being

talked about, where the latter can never be contained in the former.[29]

Finally, in spite of the systematic character of his work, Barth is reluctant to call

the *CD* a system. Rather, to him, the closest Christian dogmatics can get to a cognitive

system is in the *loci* form of "Melanchthon and also Calvin" in that in such a form, the

individual doctrines "did not pretend to proceed from a higher unity than that of the Word

of God itself, or to express any higher syntheses than arise out of the Word of God, or to

be rooted and held together in any higher system than that of the Word of God."[30] But for

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cohesion, and therefore of systematics in the best sense of the word" (Barth, *Doctrine of Reconciliation, Part 1*, 527).

[28] This should not be confused with the universal concept of being which Barth particularly avoided, but rather, this is intended in the *ontic* sense of a particular being, a personal entity.

[29] In at least one statement, Barth connects this idea to the distinction often made between "open" and "closed" systems discussed in chapter 2: "There can be a contemplation of the divine world-rule, and therefore of world-occurrence under this rule, and therefore a Christian view of things, only in the movement of faith itself from within outwards, and in the concrete realization of its perception. We have said that this perception or recognition is possible only in the light and power of the Holy Ghost, in the freedom of faith in which the freedom of the divine providence is manifested. But on both sides this means that there cannot be a closed and static Christian system" (Barth, *Doctrine of Creation, Part 3*, 55).

[30] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 870. See also, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *An Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 50: "We are led, then, to four basic *loci* or tenets: God, creation, reconciliation, and redemption. These four might seem to derive from the doctrine of the divine unity and trinity, but Barth does not accept this in the sense of deliberate systematization. The four *loci* and the doctrine of the divine unity and trinity all derive, as they should, from the same source—the Word and work of God in his self-revelation—so that any structural parallelism is not imposed *by* us on the matter but imposed *on* us by the matter. In other words, it is not by conscious systematization, but under the pressure of the actuality of the Word that we are led to the Trinity and then to the four *loci* as the authentic themes of dogmatics."

our purposes here, the *CD* is being evaluated insofar as it fulfills the definition provided in chapter 2 as a cognitive whole of articulated theological doctrines. And as such, the *CD* is, at least on the surface, an exhaustive collection of Christian doctrines. The question remains, however, whether it can be called more than an aggregate since Barth himself almost seems to see it so. Therefore, in order to continue with this analysis, it is necessary to determine whether the *CD* is articulated as a whole or whether it is only a number of doctrines in a list with explanations.

The Unity of the *CD*

Of course, Barth himself admits to a "striving" for "coherence."[31] Greater evidence, however, would be whether the doctrines of the *CD* can be considered as articulated parts of a whole. And it is actually in his statement distinguishing his recommended method for theology (*loci*) from "systems" that he betrays his principle of articulation (if not the principle of articulation for those expressions of theology that he recommends): "basic dogmatic tenets which did not pretend to proceed from a higher unity than that of the Word of God itself."[32] In other words, whether or not it can be called a 'principle' or whether or not it is available to apprehension, to Barth, the doctrines of the *CD* cannot be a 'mere aggregate' in that they have their unity in "the Word of God." Therefore, though what he means by "the Word of God" requires further

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[31] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 868–869.

[32] "Concretely applied, all this means that the unfolding and presentation of the content of the Word of God must take place fundamentally in such a way that the Word of God is understood as the centre and foundation of dogmatics and of Church proclamation, like a circle whose periphery forms the starting-point for a limited number of lines which in dogmatics are to be drawn to a certain distance in all directions" (ibid., 869–870).

explanation and the fact that he stops short of calling his work a "whole," I should be free

to continue with the architectonic analysis, in that the *CD* fulfills the definition of

"system" provided in chapter 2.[33] Before doing so, however, some of the secondary

source statements about the unity or systematicity of the *CD* should strengthen the

evidence here.

Secondary Source Statements about the Systematicity of the *CD*

In addition to his own statements regarding the systematicity of the *CD*, the

nuance and problems involved in this discussion have been taken up in the secondary

literature as well.[34] On the one hand, there is a strong impression of unity in the *CD*,

often implied by an organizing principle, theme, or motif,[35] whereas, on the other hand,

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[33] Barth's idea of "the Word of God" is discussed further below along with the element of the whole in the *CD*.

[34] "What about system? Barth has two counterbalancing thoughts here. System is to be avoided in the sense of focusing on a specific article or articles, with a clear-cut distinction between the basic and the non-basic. It militates against the freedom of obedience, not allowing the Word itself to be truly basic and central. Nevertheless, this does not rule out a systematic or architectonic handling either of the whole or of specific doctrines. If it did, Barth would come under his own criticisms, for *Church Dogmatics* and its individual volumes give ample evidence of careful planning and balanced structuring. . . . Materially Barth can sometimes be the victim of his own architectonic skill and inventive mind. He escapes systematization in one sense but cannot wholly escape the problems of systematic integration" (Bromiley, *Introduction*, 50, 247). "Barth thought systematically about the subject matter or theology but he did not think in terms of a system" (Hunsinger, *How to Read*, 29).

[35] "For these reasons the search of the basic motif of his colossal dogmatic structure remains vitally relevant. This search is no doubt a difficult one, and many who undertake it will be conscious of having left the main path now and again. Still, considering the importance of the problems involved, the urgency of determining the central theme of Barth's thought cannot be disputed. It cannot be disputed either that the longer one concerns himself with Barth's theology, the more the conviction takes root that one meets here a consistent development of a central thought, that there is discernable in it a clearly recognizable theme amid all the variations of the whole. The

there is caution raised to discourage this tendency.[36] At least out of respect for Barth's

own attempt to produce an expression of theology that is responsible to its content and

thus, not a system, there are no significant arguments for his work to be considered, in

search for the central motif has now been pursued for some thirty years, and the results have been very varied. All manner of motifs and themes have been suggested. Some have subsequently been revised, others have been maintained up to the latest phases in the development of Barth's thought" (Berkouwer, *Triumph*, 10). "Here we are at the cornerstone of Barth's whole theology [his doctrine of election]. With it stands or falls the whole doctrine of God and the world, of creation and redemption, of man and divine providence" (von Balthasar, *Theology*, 164).

[36] "Barth does not simply deal with an individual doctrine in its proper sequence and then move on to the next. For him, God himself, not the doctrines, constitutes the theme of theology. Hence all the doctrines are closely interwoven. . . . Many of the studies which presuppose a knowledge of the text show no great evidence of a full acquaintance with it. A simple test will often make this clear. Is the writer trying to group Barth's theology under some master concept such as grace or covenant or history? Even a casual knowledge of the *Dogmatics* should quickly make plain that this is one of the things that Barth specifically wants to avoid, since God is the theme of theology and is not to be confused with anything else. It is for this material reason, and not just on methodological grounds, that Barth does not systematize. Nor does Barth do unconsciously what he does not intend to do. A broader reading of the *Dogmatics* clearly indicates that no single doctrine dominates the whole. Attention focuses on this or that theme from time to time, but the spotlight remains constantly and consistently on God. Even Christ's centrality is meant to point to (and not away from) the centrality of the triune God. Hence secondary works which try to systematize the *Dogmatics* must obviously be treated with caution. . . . Barth does not believe in systematization but here, as elsewhere in his *Church Dogmatics*, he obviously has no objection to systematizing. He makes no single doctrine the center. He focuses constantly on the Trinitarian work that comes to expression in the person and work of Christ. Nevertheless, he elaborately integrates the many and varied elements in reconciliation in such a way as to see and understand it as an interrelated and comprehensive whole" (Bromiley, *Introduction*, x, 179). "The subject matter of theology, as he understood it, is richly dynamic, endlessly surprising, and deeply mysterious. Even the most refined theological conceptualities are too crude to capture it. Because it is more nearly musical than architectural, more nearly verbal than substantive, it cannot be imprisoned in a system. Theological construction must therefore in principle be more like musical invention than like architectural formation. It must try to correspond to the subject matter without containing it" (Hunsinger, *How to Read*, 29). "Barth is not actually suggesting that the doctrine of either the person or work of Christ (or both, if they are deemed inseparable) should stand at the centre of a Christian dogmatics, nor that a Christological idea or principle should constitute the systematic speculative midpoint of a deductive system" (Alister McGrath, *A Scientific Theology: Reality* [London: T & T Clark, 2002], 232).

fact, a system. But, again, this should only underscore the importance of clarifying the

distinction between what he is attempting and what he and others are calling a "closed

system."[37]

Consequently, the *CD* can be confidently understood, with qualifications, as a

cognitive theological system. More specifically, the *CD* is not a closed system. Also, a

distinction has to be made between the subject matter of dogmatics as "the Word of God"

and "the Church's talk about God." The essential[38] subject of the *CD*, the Word of God,

cannot be apprehended or expressed as a system, while the general content or *loci*, that is,

"the Church's talk about God," can be understood and expressed as a system.[39]

Therefore, as long as it is not closed and it is understood in the latter sense of the above

distinction, there should be no obstacles hindering the application of the architectonic

analysis to the *CD* as a cognitive theological system. Therefore, the second question

concerning the *whole* can now be addressed.

Whole: What Expectation Is to Be Fulfilled by This System?

Much like Aquinas's *ST*, the *CD* clearly involves both cognitive and ontological

aspects of system. Additionally, the *CD* represents the dual aspects of system as structure

and as process. What is expected in the cognitive whole is a structure, which Barth refers

to as "a better Church dogmatics,"[40] that would treat the *loci* or "basic dogmatic tenets"[41]

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[37] Barth, *Doctrine of Creation, Part 3*, 55; Torrence, *Karl Barth*, 129.

[38] This in the sense of 'essence' vs. 'integral.'

[39] This is explained more fully below.

[40] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, xvi.

[41] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 870.

of Christian theology with an eye for "definiteness and coherence."[42] In this, the *CD*

differs little from most other theological systems. In terms of the ontological aspect of

the whole however, the *CD* presents a unique approach involving the process of the

transmission of theological knowledge and its effects on the knower.

The *CD* as Structure

Similarly to other theological systems, in his preface to the first part of the first

volume, Barth describes the intended structure of the *CD* as a sequential treatment of

what he called the four basic *loci* or tenets of Christian theology: the doctrines of God,

creation, reconciliation, and redemption, which will be discussed more fully below in the

question on the *parts*.[43] It is interesting, however, that Barth seems reluctant to refer to

the *CD* as a 'whole' even to the extent that he describes his treatment of the *loci* as

"gymnastics" at best.[44] In fact, he warns that the tendency towards systems can be

considered idolatry in that it is creating an "image" of God, "according to the measure of

what we men call unity."[45] But, like his objection to systems, his objection here is to

dogmatics being a particular kind of whole, that is, a whole in which the four tenets

above are integrated by a systematizing principle other than the Word of God.[46] And

based on this distinction, dogmatics must "refrain from presenting the whole as a

whole."[47]

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[42] Ibid., 869.

[43] Ibid., 878.

[44] Ibid., 78–79.

[45] Ibid., 878.

[46] Ibid., 868ff.

[47] Ibid., 869.

But does this mean that the *CD* was intended to be a mere aggregate? On the contrary, notwithstanding the "essentially gymnastic character" of the work, Barth did hope, in the completion of the *CD*, to provide a "better Church dogmatics" and a "more significant and solid contribution" to the theological issues of his day.[48] And even from a hasty reading of the *CD*, and in spite of his disclaimers,[49] one gets the impression of unity and wholeness in the overall work.[50] Therefore, in spite of his distaste for the implication of dogmatics as a "whole," the *CD* is pointing to at least a hypothetical whole through its commitment to coherence. In other words, in its "definite" and "coherent" treatment of various *loci* as "parts of the whole" (*pars pro toto*), it leads its readers to an experience—

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[48] "I believe in the fact that, quite apart from its ethical applications, a better Church dogmatics might well be finally a more significant and solid contribution even to such questions and tasks as that of German liberation than most of the well-meant stuff which even so many theologians think in dilettante fashion that they can and should supply in relation to these questions and tasks. For these reasons I hold myself forbidden to be discouraged. For these reasons I venture upon what is really a venture for me too, addressing myself in the middle of 1932 to a dogmatics, and to a dogmatics of such compass" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, xvi).

[49] "The essentially 'gymnastic' character of dogmatics is shown already by these restrictions regarding the presupposed *factum* [successive generations of "talk about God" with its cultural/contextual limitations]. As a critical survey of the past, dogmatics can work only through examples and not comprehensively or exhaustively" (ibid., 78). At this point, one can't help noticing the apparent contradiction between the above statement and his later statement concerning his attempts at "definiteness and coherence." Perhaps this is testimony to the nuance in Barth's thought, in that, though he never explains the difference, the words themselves in both statements can be describing two different sets of attributes, that is, in their respective contexts, the terms "comprehensive" (*umfassend*) and "exhaustive" (*erschöpfend*) indicate the quantity of subjects/questions/topics/etc. that are treated, while the terms "definiteness" (*Bestimmtheit*) and "coherence" (*Zusammenhang*) indicate the quality of the treatment.

[50] "The more deeply one reads Barth, the more one senses that his use of repetition is never pointless. Rather it serves as a principle of organization and development within an ever forward spiraling theological whole" (Hunsinger, *How to Read*, 28).

the *CD* as process—of an implied whole beyond the 'visible' parts.[51] Before looking at

the parts themselves, however, it is necessary to look at this hypothetical whole that is

expected by the *CD* as process.

The *CD* as Process

The whole that is expected in the *CD* as process has mainly to do with what Barth

calls the Church's "self-examination" (*Selbstprüfung*) of the "content of its [own]

distinctive talk about God."[52] Thus, this is a reflective or introspective process that can

only be performed from within the Christian Church, on the Christian Church. And, it is

a specialized process in that it focuses on the Church's "distinctive" (unique to the

Christian Church and its history) talk about God. Finally, Barth has produced the *Church

Dogmatics* as his contribution, as a theologian in the Christian Church, to this process. In

order to fully understand the process introduced here, however, there are four questions

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[51] "This fulfilled time which is identical with Jesus Christ, this absolute event in relation to which every other event is not yet event or has ceased to be so, this 'It is finished,' this *Deus dixit* for which there are no analogies, is the revelation attested in the Bible. To understand the Bible from beginning to end, from verse to verse, is to understand how everything in it relates to this as its invisible-visible centre. . . . The unity of revelation guarantees the unity of the biblical witness in and in spite of all its multiplicity and even contradictoriness. The unity of the Bible guarantees the unity of the Church in and in spite of the difference in the proportion of faith in which the Bible becomes revelation to this man and that man and to this man and that man to-day and to-morrow. On this basis the unity of the Church guarantees the unity of proclamation" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 117); "Dogma is an eschatological idea, to which each particular dogmatic statement is only an approximation, which can neither anticipate it nor conceal it. This is a truth which the Church can easily forget, and if it does, the result is that in its preoccupation with mere creeds and dogmas it loses the capacity for confession and the living relationship with true dogma" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 865).

[52] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 3.

that must be addressed, namely: What is to be examined? Who can conduct this examination? How is this examination to be conducted? And, what will be the result?

What Is to Be Examined?

Barth addresses this question immediately after this process is introduced in the first section of the first volume. He does so by introducing what he calls the "threefold form" of the Christian Church's talk about God: (1) in the "action of each individual believer"; (2) in "its specific action as a fellowship"; and finally, (3) in the "criticizing and revising" of "its (the Church's) speech about God."[53] In other words, what is examined in the process, of which the *CD* is an example, is the content of the Church's talk about God as it is heard from its three sources: (1) from the actions and speech of the individual believers; (2) from the preaching, liturgy ("administration of the sacraments"), and ministry (externally to "the sick, the weak and those in jeopardy") of the congregations (the Church as "fellowship"); and finally, (3) from the Church's reflection on all of its talk about God.[54]

Notice, that in the third source of the Church's talk about God, there is a reflection, not only on the first two, but all sources. This means that in the third form, the Church is reflecting on the first two sources and it is reflecting on its reflecting.   As a process, this is actually a "closed system" in the sense that there can be no external perspective from which this content is examined. Of course this is already getting into the question of who does the examining, but it is relevant here in that the results of the process of examination are subject to the same process in a circular or reflexive sense of

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

looking at something and a looking-at-the-looking simultaneously. For my purposes

here, however, it is enough to say that the target of this examination includes the

Church's talk about God in the speech and action of individual believers, congregations,

and those doing the examining.

In addition to his limitations on the target of this examination, Barth is emphatic

on the limitations regarding the sources of this "talk," in that they are all human.[55] That

is, in spite of the fact that it is talk about God, it is humans who are speaking. Thus, the

"material content" of the *CD* as process is "human speech" through and through. In fact,

it is specifically the speech of "fallen" humans.[56] This is not to say that God isn't

speaking, but that if so, his speaking is coming to us in/through the form of human

speech.[57] Therefore, the "what" that is to be examined in the *CD* is a specific type of

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[55] "But in so doing it recognizes and takes up as an active Church the further human task of revising its speech about God. . . . Theology guides the talk of the Church to the extent that it concretely reminds it that in all circumstances it is fallible human work which in the matter of relevance or irrelevance lies in the balance, and must be obedience to grace if it is to be well done. Theology accompanies the utterance of the Church to the extent that it is itself no more than human 'talk about God', so that with this talk it stands under the judgment that begins at the house of God and lives by the promise given to the Church" (ibid., 3).

[56] "Not all human talk is talk about God. It could be and should be. There is no reason in principle which it should not be. God is the Lord from whom and to whom we exist. Even the realities and truths distinct from Him and us which usually from the concrete occasion and subject of human speech exist from Him and to Him. Hence there is no genuinely profane speech. In the last resort, there is only talk about God. Yet serious reflection on human talk about God must take as its starting point the fact that this is not at all the case, that it is quite impossible to interpret human talk as such as talk about God. We do not know man, i.e., ourselves, as man in his original estate and therefore as the man of the kingdom of glory. Of this man it might well be said that all his talk is talk about God. But we do not know ourselves as this man. We know ourselves only as the man to whom mercy is shown as the one who is fallen, lost and condemned. We know ourselves only as man in the kingdom of grace, of the present age between the time of creation and that of redemption" (ibid., 47).

[57] Ibid., 52.

"human speech" that is conditioned by the "faith"[58] that God's speech is somehow accompanying ours as "proclamation."[59]

The final limitation of what is to be examined in the Church's self-examination of its talk about God is that, as human speech, its content is conditioned by time.[60] In other words, at any given time, the Church's talk about God is conditioned by the language, worldviews, needs of the listeners, etc., of that time. Furthermore, as such, it becomes the content for future talk about God even if only a "fraction" survives. Therefore, a literal whole of the Church's talk about God would be everything that has ever been said or done by any believer in history that could be considered content for theology. But as

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[58] "Dogmatics is a part of the work of human knowledge. But this part of the work of human knowledge stands under a particularly decisive condition. Like all work of human knowledge, it naturally demands the intellectual faculties of attentiveness and concentration, of understanding and appraisal. Like all serious work of human knowledge, it demands the best will to utilize these faculties and ultimately the giving of the whole man to this utilization. Over and above this, however, it demands Christian faith" (ibid., 17).

[59] "Talk about God in the Church seeks to be proclamation to the extent that in the form of preaching and sacrament it is directed to man with the claim and expectation that in accordance with its commission it has to speak to him the Word of God to be heard in faith. Inasmuch as it is a human word in spite of this claim and expectation, it is the material of dogmatics, i.e., of the investigation of its responsibility as measured by the Word of God which it seeks to proclaim" (ibid., 47). Barth's concept of "proclamation" is discussed further below.

[60] "But as this correction of talk about God can deal with only a portion of what was said previously, so only a portion of what will be said about God in the Church to-morrow can be directly corrected, and even this portion can be regarded as only primarily and provisionally corrected. The self-examination of the Church in respect of its proclamation will have to continue to-morrow with the proclamation itself. . . . In dogmatics criticism and correction of talk about God can be practiced only on a specific section of the whole world of past and future Church proclamation. We have to learn, and in dogmatics, too, this can be done only for the needs of the next day" (ibid., 78–79).

already pointed out, Barth insists that this literal whole of the Church's talk through all time is not available as such for obvious reasons.[61]

Again, this is not to say that this 'existential whole' of the Church's talk about God throughout history does not exist or is not a 'whole,' just that we can only have access to it in 'glimpses' or condensations of its more timeless themes and principles, what Barth prefers to call *loci*. In fact, in this sense, Barth seems to be presuming the literal meaning of *loci communes*—commonplaces—as it was understood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[62] That is, to Barth, the Church's talk about God through history tended to 'come back' to the same 'places' over and over and as such these 'places' become the main themes of theology.[63] Hence, the "what" that is examined in dogmatics is the Church's talk about God throughout history as it is condensed and passed on in the basic *loci* of Christian theology.

Who Can Conduct This Examination?

The most obvious answer to this question is of course that this examination is in fact a "self-examination" which already tells us that those who conduct it find their identity within that which they are examining. In other words, this examination can only be conducted by those who are "in the Church."[64] Of course, to Barth, being in the Church involves more than affiliation: "To be in the Church, however, is to be called

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[61] Ibid., 79.

[62] Ong, *Ramus*, 116ff.

[63] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 870. See also, Hotson, *Commonplace Learning*, 187ff.

[64] "Dogmatics is a function of the Christian Church. The Church tests itself by essaying it. . . . But there is no possibility of dogmatics at all outside the Church" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 17).

with others by Jesus Christ. To act in the Church is to act in obedience to this call. This

obedience to the call of Christ is faith."[65] And thus, the self-examination of the Church's

talk about God can only be conducted by those who have been called by Jesus Christ and

have responded to that call obediently in faith.

How Is This Examination Conducted?

Early in the *CD*, Barth explains how the self-examination of the Church's talk

about God is to be conducted, as a "science."[66] Specifically, the Church "measures its

action, its talk about God, against its being as the Church."[67] In other words, "the

question of truth, with which theology is concerned throughout, is the question as to the

agreement of the Church's distinctive talk about God with the being of the Church."[68]

Therefore, this examination is a process of evaluating the Church's talk about God by a

specific criterion, which Barth identifies as "the being of the Church." Of course, this

begs the question to what he means by "the being of the Church?" Is he merely saying

that the Church evaluates its utterance by itself?

Without much explanation, at least in that pericope, Barth answers this question

abruptly by qualifying the above statements, stating that "the criterion of past, future and

therefore present Christian utterance is thus the being of the Church, namely Jesus Christ,

God in his gracious revealing and reconciling address to man. Does Christian utterance

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[65] Ibid., 17.

[66] Ibid., 3ff.

[67] Ibid., 4.

[68] Ibid.

derive from Him? Does it lead to Him? Is it conformable to Him?"[69] Of course, this

raises more questions, many of which are addressed more fully below. For now,

however, in providing a general description of the *CD* as process, it is enough to say that

this process is conducted by measuring the Church's talk about God by the specific

criterion outlined above.

What Will Be the Result?

Regarding the result of the Church's self-examination, Barth is a little less

explicit. He does, however, provide a vague idea suggesting that "to the extent that

dogmatics receives this standard by which it measures talk about God in Jesus Christ, in

the event of divine action corresponding to the promise given to the Church, it is possible

for it to be knowledge of the truth."[70] But he is not necessarily saying 'truth' in general

or in universal terms here, but rather the specific truth about "what is or is not the true

content of such talk about God" which can be expected to be made "clear at once and

with complete fullness and certainty."[71] Thus, the result of the self-examination of the

Church's talk about God is the clear and certain truth about "what is or is not the true

content of such talk." But this is not all, for, to Barth, this is only one of two events that

should be expected by this process.

The knowledge of the truth about the content of the Church's talk about God

pointed out above is the first event, the "divine answer" to the "human question" asked

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[69] Ibid. Notice the scope of this statement. It is discussed more below how this statement comes close to encapsulating the whole *CD*.

[70] Ibid., 12.

[71] Ibid.

by dogmatics.[72] The second event is the "fulfillment of this knowledge" in the "event of human action" with its corresponding "appropriation" in which "through the stages of intuitive apprehension to formulated comprehension, the revelation of the *analogia fidei* and the resultant clarity in dogmatics . . . take creaturely form."[73] In other words, the result of the self-examination of the Church's talk about God comes first in the event of a clear and certain knowledge of its true content and second in the event of the Church's response to its content through corresponding human action.

In this section on the question regarding the whole, it has been shown that the whole anticipated by the *CD* as a cognitive theological system can be identified both in terms of structure and process. The whole as structure is, much like Aquinas's *ST*, a comprehensive treatment of the author's idea of the "basic tenets" of Christian theology. And, though Barth presents this treatment in fourteen volumes, he is more comfortable with the term "gymnastic" than "comprehensive" in that he insists that the true whole being described cannot be adequately contained in the form of a cognitive system. As such, however, Barth's *loci* certainly refer to a true whole even if not completely visible.

As a process, it was shown how the *CD* is a contribution to the ongoing self-examination of the Church's talk about God. This process was outlined further in terms of what is examined (the Church's talk about God in the present and as it has been condensed from the past), who conducts the examination (those in the Christian Church who respond to the call of Jesus Christ in the obedience of faith), *how* the examination is conducted (according to the criterion of the "being of the Church," Jesus Christ, the Word

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

of God), and the result of the examination (a newly criticized and corrected knowledge of the Church's talk about God coupled with the appropriate human response). Thus, having outlined the *CD* as a whole both in terms of its structure and process, it should now be possible to direct our attention to the parts that comprise this whole.

Parts: What Are the Nature and Role(s) of the Parts of This System?

The Nature of the Parts

In terms of the nature of the parts of the *CD*, Barth describes the content of dogmatics as the Church's talk about God, or more specifically as the self-examination of the same. And, as such, Barth describes the nature of this self-examination as "theological science."[74] Of course, much like Aquinas's argument in the first question in the *ST*, in the first section of the first volume Barth offers an argument regarding theology's place among, while maintaining its distinction from, the other sciences.[75] As a "science" among other sciences, theology is (1) "a human concern with a definite object of knowledge," (2) "it treads a definite and self-consistent path of knowledge," and (3) "it must give an account of this path to itself and to all others who are capable of concern for this object and therefore of treading this path."[76] But in its distinction from the other sciences, still in line with the *ST*, Barth argues that theological science could possibly

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[74] "When the Church puts to itself the question of truth in its threefold form in a way which is objective and not arbitrary, its self-examination acquires the character of a scientific undertaking which has its own place alongside other human undertakings of the same or a similar kind" (ibid., 5).

[75] Ibid., 5ff.

[76] Ibid., 8.

even be considered "more of a science" in that it commits itself to an internal criterion or principle of analysis versus an external criterion or principle.[77]

In addition to the characteristic of being a science, the parts of the *CD* are also described as "dogmatics."[78] Specifically, to Barth, inasmuch as the science of theology is accountable to its distinctive internal criterion, the Word of God, it is thus dogmatics.[79] "It is in terms of such conformity that dogmatics investigates Christian utterance. Hence it does not have to begin by finding or inventing the standard by which it measures. It sees and recognizes that this is given in the church."[80] Therefore, what distinguishes the science of theology from other sciences is its peculiar principle of criterion, the Word of God, which, when taken seriously—"to the extent that dogmatics has this task," it is called "dogmatics" (*theologia dogmatica*).[81] "Our translation of this is not 'the science of

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[77] "Theology follows the talk of the Church to the extent that in its question as to the correctness of its utterance it does not measure it by an alien standard but by its own source and object. . . . Its task, not in fact discharged by other sciences, is that of the criticism and correction of talk about God according to the criterion of the Church's own principle. . . . Theology has no reason not to call itself as science. It may well prove to be more of a science than many or even all the sciences grouped under the above convention" (ibid., 4, 6, 10).

[78] "Dogmatics is the self-examination of the Christian Church in respect of the content of its distinctive talk about God" (ibid., 11).

[79] "It is a matter of investigating the 'responsibility' of this talk, namely, of Church proclamation measured by the Word of God that it is seeking to proclaim. . . . The task of dogmatics is the examination of Church proclamation in respect of its agreement with the Word of God, its congruity with what it is trying to proclaim" (ibid., 250); "Talk about God has true content when it conforms to the being of the Church, i.e., when it conforms to Jesus Christ" (ibid., 12).

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

dogmas' but 'the science of dogma.' Dogma is the agreement of Church proclamation with the revelation attested in Holy Scripture."[82]

Also concerning the nature of the parts as dogmatics, where Aquinas sees *sacra doctrinae* as something that must be added to philosophy, Barth insists that dogmatics must remain exclusive of philosophy or at least free from its presuppositions, "a basic view of things," or "alien principles rather than its own."[83] Thus instead of being added to complete our human knowledge, to Barth, the content of Christian dogmatics, if it is obedient to its source, the Word of God, is incompatible to human knowledge.[84] And though he admits at some levels at least that recourse to philosophy to understand Scripture or theological concepts cannot be avoided,[85] the essence of the process of "self-examination" outlined above is the "criticizing and correcting" of the inevitable results of such synthesis which is contrary to the criterion of the *viva vox* (living speech) of the Word of God.[86] So, in spite of the unavoidable human phenomenon of the intrusion of philosophy into our talk about God, dogmatics must always be obedient to God's freedom to contradict us.

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[82] Ibid., 265.

[83] Ibid., 6.

[84] "No matter how philosophers may or may not reach an understanding on these matters, they will do so as philosophers and not as theologians. That is, they will not do so out of any responsible regard for the theme of theology. Hence theology cannot learn anything from them and ought not to do so, unless it is ready to let them intrude a philosophical theme instead of its own, as has always happened when it has accepted material instruction from any philosophy. . . . But there is no human knowing that corresponds to this divine telling" (ibid., 125, 132).

[85] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 727ff.

[86] Ibid., 848.

Finally, in addition to being "science" and "dogma," Barth is careful to remind his readers that the content of dogmatics, as "talk about God," is always "human utterance" and "part of the work of human knowledge."[87] In fact, the human nature of dogmatics, if not qualified, is a major problem, in that, due to the Christian narrative of sin and the present human condition, any talk about God is actually not possible from the human perspective.[88] But this "cleavage" between the human Church and its impossible object of inquiry is not the end of the story, in that, as God speaks to/through the church in its "being," God's Word is heard in spite of its human vehicle.[89] Thus, qualified with the

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[87] "Theology guides the talk of the Church to the extent that it concretely reminds it that in all circumstances it is fallible human work" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 4, 17).

[88] "It is a decisive part of the insight of all true prophecy that man as such has no possibility of uttering the Word of God" (ibid., 52); "The popular suspicion of theology, and especially of dogmatics, is only too well founded. There always seems to be an element of presumption in it, and all the exertions seem to lead to such meager results. We always seem to be handling an intractable object with inadequate means. . . . We maintain that humanly speaking there is nothing to alleviate the difficulty" (ibid., 23); "Its [the Church's] talk about God . . . is that of the intrinsically godless reason of man" (ibid., 28). "We stand under the sign of a decision constantly taken between the secularity and the sanctification of our existence, between sin and grace, between a being as man which forgets God, which is absolutely neutral in relation to Him and therefore absolutely hostile, and one which in His revelation is awakened by faith to being in the Church, to the appropriation of His promise. This cleavage continually applies, however, to human speech as well. . . . Neither the subject nor the intention makes human speech sanctified talk about God" (ibid., 47–48). "Revelation itself is needed for knowing that God is hidden and man blind" (ibid., 29).

[89] "We simply confess the mystery that underlies it, and we merely repeat the statement that dogmatics is possible only as an act of faith. . . . Revelation itself creates of itself the necessary point of contact in man. . . . The place from which the way of dogmatic knowledge is to be seen and understood can be neither a prior anthropological possibility nor a subsequent ecclesiastical reality, but only the present moment of the speaking and hearing of Jesus Christ Himself, the divine creation of light in our hearts. . . . Proclamation is human speech in and by which God Himself speaks like a king through the mouth of his herald, and which is meant to be heard and accepted as speech in and by which God Himself speaks. . . . Where human talk about God is proclamation, it raises this claim and lives in the atmosphere of this expectation. By what

promise of divine interjection, the parts of the *CD* are inescapably human in nature. But as such, the Church's talk about God is to be understood in a sacramental or even incarnational sense of a human vessel of divine speech which must be continually "criticized and corrected" by its conformity or lack thereof to its divine source.[90]

Thus the parts of the *CD* can be understood in three prominent natures or characteristics as outlined by Barth and discussed above. They are 'science' in that they have a definite object of knowledge approached with a method determined by their own content. They are 'dogmatics' in that this science is obedient to its internal divine criterion, the Word of God. And they are 'human' in that, though God is the expected subject and source of the Church's talk about him, that talk never ceases to be human and thus subject to the ongoing need for self-examination. And now, having looked at the nature of the parts, we can look at their role(s).

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right? Certainly not by that of the logical form or material content, of the religious profundity or personal power, which might pertain to this human talk about God in itself. In and with all that it is in itself, it can only serve God's own Word. Nor does God's own Word cease to be itself when it allows itself to be served by human utterance. But as it allows itself to be served by it, it is itself this human utterance, and as this human utterance serves it, it is itself God's own Word" (ibid., 23, 29, 41, 52).

[90] "In dogmatics the Church has to measure its talk about God by the standard of its own being, i.e., of divine revelation. . . . The 'not only—but also' means first that human talk, with its motives and themes and the judgments among which it stands as human talk, is there even while God's Word is there. . . . Real proclamation as this new event, in which the event of human talk is not set aside by God but exalted, is the Word of God. . . . The Word of God preached means. . . man's talk about God in which and through which God speaks about Himself" (ibid., 28, 93–95). "But not even for a moment can we forget that, when and in so far as we do think and speak the truth in Church proclamation and dogmatics, it is God Himself and alone who, using man as His servant, and without incurring any obligation to him, has actually thought *His* thoughts and spoken *His* word. It is only in this modesty that we do think and speak the truth. And this modesty includes the realization that in God's light we are shown to be darkness, in God's judgment we are exposed as liars, and that we shall think and speak the truth always against our own selves" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 884).

In the *CD* the parts relate to each other and the whole both in terms of structure and process. As a structure, Barth focuses on four specific *loci* as the main parts of the whole. Also, as this structure can be understood as the "unfolding of the Word of God," it can be illustrated much like a wheel with four spokes. Finally, this structure is revealed through a dialectical process of God's speaking and dogmatics listening in the obedience of faith.

The Role(s) of the Parts of the *CD* as Structure

As the parts in the *CD* relate to each other in terms of structure, Barth displays a strong preference to the concept of *loci* to describe these relationships.[91] And, though as in the *ST*, the *CD* represents both external as well as internal relational structures, Barth is reluctant to identify or focus on the internal relationships in fear of encouraging the tendency towards system.[92] He does not, however, deny the reality of the internal relationships, only that at that level, they are only related together through their common "centre" the Word of God and as such cannot be "systematized."[93] Of course this qualification requires more unpacking, but before looking at the internal role(s), it is first necessary to outline the external relationships in more detail.

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[91] Ibid., 869–870.

[92] "The question arises whether behind the unfolding of the content of this Word of God in these four specific *Loci*, there is not implied a fundamental principle from which these four *Loci* may be systematically developed" (ibid., 878).

[93] Ibid., 877.

The parts of the *CD* as *loci*

In describing the external structure of the *CD*, as noted above, Barth refers to the parts as *loci*.[94] Interestingly, however, he provides little explanation of what he means by this term, other than restating it as "basic dogmatic tenets" (*dogmatische Grundsätze*).[95] But when this phrase is understood in light of the historical context of the phrase, *loci communes* of the early Protestant theological works, it becomes clearer. Basically, Barth seems to be appealing to the concept of historical consensus or convention in these terms, that is, the content of theology should be comprised of the doctrines and concepts that the Christian church has returned to and addressed most consistently throughout history. Thus, in terms of their role(s) in the external structure of the *CD*, as *loci*, the parts relate to each other and the whole as the topics ('commonplaces') on which theology most frequently focuses historically.[96]

Of course this implies rather superficial or even haphazard relationships which could suggest no more than an aggregate and thus no real whole or system could be expected. In spite of this, however, Barth allows a "definiteness and coherence" in the more internal relationships of these *loci*, but with qualifications which will be discussed below. For now, it can be said that at the external level the *loci* relate to each other and the whole as the conventional topics of historical Christian theology.

Specifically, according to the 'plan of the book,' there are four *loci*: the doctrine of the Word of God (volume I, parts 1 and 2); the doctrine of God (volume II); the

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[94] Ibid., 870ff.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 78.

doctrine of creation (volume III); the doctrine of reconciliation (volume IV); and the

doctrine of redemption (volume V).[97] Then, each volume is divided into chapters (for

example: Chapter I: The Word of God as the Criterion of Dogmatics; Chapter II: The

Revelation of God; etc.), which are further divided by sections (§1. The Task of

Dogmatics, §2. The Task of Prolegomena to Dogmatics, etc.) and sub-sections (1. The

Church Theology and Science, 2. Dogmatics as an Enquiry, etc.) The chapters are

consecutive within each volume and the sub-sections are consecutive within each section.

The sections are consecutive throughout the whole work, however, with a total of

seventy-three sections plus the fragment of a seventy-fourth. Of course as it worked out,

he was never able to finish the last part of the fourth volume, and the fifth never saw the

presses.

The parts of the *CD* as the "unfolding
of the content of the Word of God"

In terms of the internal role(s) of the parts of the *CD*, Barth describes what he

calls "dogmatic method" as "the unfolding and presentation of the content of the Word of

God."[98] Then, more specifically, in terms of the relationship of the parts to the whole,

Barth uses the term *theonomy* to describe the parts inasmuch as they are obedient "to the

work and action of God taking place in His Word."[99] In other words, the parts of the *CD*

relate to the whole to the extent that they represent some aspect of the Word of God.[100]

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[97] Ibid., xvi.

[98] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 853.

[99] Ibid., 857.

[100] "Therefore the content of dogmatics can only be an exposition of the work and action of God as it takes place in His Word" (ibid., 856).

As such, any part that is properly *theonomous*—accurately representing the Word of God,

can also be said to be necessary to the whole.[101] Conversely, any part that is not obedient

to the Word of God is superfluous and as such it is obedient to some other law

(*heteronomy*), which threatens to replace God's Word as the "true object" of Christian

dogmatics.[102]

In terms of dependence/independence, Barth argues that, of the largest parts—the

four *loci*—no one of them should "be subordinated or super-ordinated," but that all four

should be "co-ordinated" with each other "in a real union by reason of their common

origin and end in the Word of God."[103] In fact, he goes on to say that even if these four

are allowed to

> retain their independence of each other, we are in no sense guilty of an arbitrary
> dismemberment of the one Word of God. . . . It is in this way, in differentiation, that
> the Word and the existence of God are revealed to us, that God grounds the
> knowledge of Himself, even the knowledge of Himself in His unity. This distinction
> and independence of the four *Loci* arises from the fact of the self-revelation of the one
> and triune God. . . . So, then, we need not excuse and deplore as a necessary
> imperfection of human thinking and speaking the distinction and independence of the

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[101] "It is, of course, indisputable that for Christian thinking and speaking there
have at all times been *articuli fundamentales* and *articuli non fundamentales*, i.e. more
and less important elements of dogma. And in its proper use no exception can be taken to
the distinction. What was meant by *fundamentum dogmaticum* was obviously what we
have termed the possible and necessary account by the Church of its own particular
experience of encounter with the work and activity of God in His Word. . . . To that
extent a certain distinction will always be made in dogmatics between the essential and
the non-essential, the central and the peripheral, the more important and the less
important" (ibid., 864).

[102] "In proportion as the Word of God is in fact replaced, dogmatics shuts and
separates itself off from its true object. It loses contact with the event which impels both
the Church and dogmatics itself to teach. Its natural dynamic is, therefore, impaired. All
that it can do is to move within the sphere marked out by the presupposed world-view. In
doing this, it does not have in any form the comfort of obeying the law of God" (ibid.,
863).

[103] Ibid., 877.

Loci; *De Deo, De creatione, De reconciliatione, De redemptione*. . . . The thing itself commits us to this order.[104]

In other words, the four *loci* are independent to the extent that each one represents a complete "act" of God, but they are "co-ordinated" with each other in that they each represent a phase in God's overall "*actus purissimus*" (pure act) for humanity in and through his Word.[105]

Before moving on, it should be noted that, based on the autonomy given to the four individual *loci*, each *loci* could be considered a sub-system of Barth's overall non-system. In other words, where he is reluctant to unite the four *loci* into a cognitive system, could it be that, of themselves, each of the *loci* comprises a system? Could the *CD* simply be an aggregate of four separate cognitive systems? And, though from the statements above it seems the case, Barth seeks to avoid this by his insistence that the principle and center of each *loci* is also the principle and center of the whole, the Word of God, the doctrine of which comprises one of the four (the doctrine of the Word of God).[106] But before the temptation runs its course, Barth cautions that this does not mean

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[104] Ibid., 877–878.

[105] "The Word is nothing more nor less than the Creator of man, and therefore the Judge by whose sentence and verdict he does or does not exist. The same Word of God is also the Reconciler of man, through whose decision his existence, plunged into sin and guilt, is either preserved by justification and sanctification, or not preserved. The same Word is also the Redeemer of men, through whose work the ruined existence of man is either restored to its former splendor, or else not restored but abandoned to the curse that hangs over it, and therefore to nothingness. . . . God confronts us as Creator, Mediator and Redeemer, that as such He speaks and deals with us, that He is therefore God and Lord in this threefold way" (ibid., 848–849; 877).

[106] "From this point of view again, the doctrine of God inevitably acquires the character of a massive postulate. It is, of course, impossible to overlook the fact that God in His Word is also the coming Redeemer. And this fact can easily make a consistently eschatological systematization of dogmatics appear a very illuminating and tempting possibility. . . . For this reason the doctrine of redemption cannot become the centre of a

that the doctrine of the Word of God can be the organizing principle of the other three, in

that as one of the four *loci* the doctrine of the Word of God is just that, a doctrine, and as

such is not the same thing as its "object," the living Word of God.[107]

Finally, to illustrate how the four *loci* relate to each other and the whole, Barth

describes their structure like a four-spoked wheel:

> Concretely applied, all this means that the unfolding and presentation of the content
> of the Word of God must take place fundamentally in such a way that the Word of
> God is understood as the centre and foundation of dogmatics and of Church
> proclamation, like a circle whose periphery forms the starting-point for a limited
> number of lines which in dogmatics are to be drawn to a certain distance in all
> directions. The fundamental lack of principle in the dogmatic method is clear from
> the fact that it does not proceed from the centre but from the periphery of the circle.[108]

system. For this reason it must be accompanied by the doctrine of God, the doctrine of
creation and the doctrine of atonement. It must not be subordinated or superordinated,
but co-ordinated with them in a real union by reason of their common origin and end in
the Word of God" (ibid., 876–877).

[107] "In a Church dogmatics the position usually occupied in dogmatic systems by
an arbitrarily chosen basic view belongs by right to the Word of God, and the Word of
God alone. It does not belong to a conception of the Word of God. . . . But in a Church
dogmatics this conception must not assume the dignity and function of a positive
principle. It must not usurp the position of the object of dogmatics. This object, which
must dictate dogmatic method, is the Word of God itself. It is not a conception of it. It is
not, therefore, a basic dogma, tenet, principle or definition of the essence of Christianity.
It is not any kind of truth that can be controlled. Dogmatics certainly has a basis,
foundation and centre. But—and we must remember this point, especially when we are
thinking of the autonomy of dogmatics—this centre is not something which is under our
control, but something which exercises control over us. The autonomy in which
dogmatics has to choose its method must consist solely in the recognition of its
theonomy, i.e., in its free submission to the sovereignty of the Word of God alone" (ibid.,
866). "Even as Truth the Word of God remains eternal Event and is ever again Truth for
us in its living and active encounter with us, and is always sovereignly superior to *our*
statements and conceptions of it, and can never be included in our systematic
constructions. Our theological formulations, therefore, do not embody their own standard
of reference, do not become self-explanatory, nor do they carry within themselves the
proper criterion of their truthfulness. Rather do they themselves fall under the judgment
of the Truth and testify to the Word of God as their sole and proper criterion. That
means, of course, that only theological 'common places' or *loci* are possible, not a
theological system" (Torrence, *Karl Barth*, 100).

[108] Ibid., 869.

In other words, each of the four *loci* is represented by a single spoke directed outward from an inner circumference[109] toward an undetermined outer circumference.[110] Barth himself did not provide a graphic illustration of his explanation here, but the detail which he employs makes it possible to sketch a rather accurate rendition. See fig. 7.
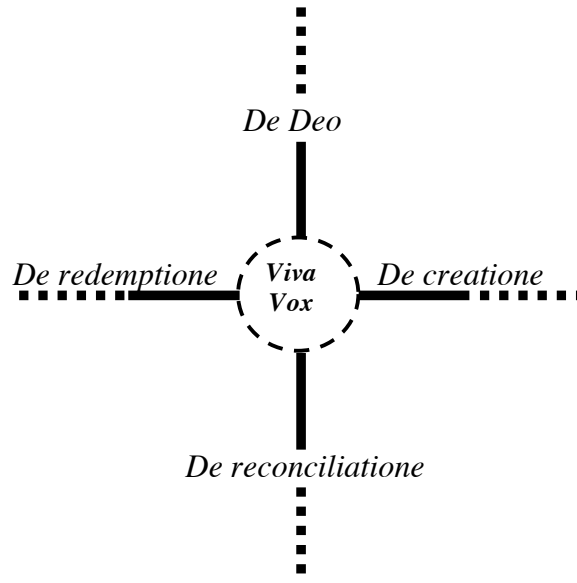
Figure 7. The four *loci* of the *CD* as spokes.

Notice each of the four *loci* radiates outward from the *viva vox* (living voice) of God's Word which is the "centre and foundation" of each. "At all four points, the Word of God itself provides the basis of our knowledge, and similarly the coherence of the lines which we have to draw from these four points (with a hint, but only a hint, at infinity).

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[109] Barth uses the term *Peripherie* (periphery, circumference) to describe this inner circle from which the spokes proceed.

[110] "And it will refrain from drawing a second circle around the whole . . . or again in the sense of attempting to draw an outer circle corresponding to the first (and therefore infinite)" (ibid.).

At the centre, in the Word of God itself as the original point from which they diverge, they are one."[111] But to Barth the center of this structure is not directly accessible, "but inevitably this point from which they proceed remains invisible."[112] Thus, the points converge in the middle as if in a vanishing point as in the art concept of *perspective* where lines that are parallel seem to join in the distance, as shown in figure 8.
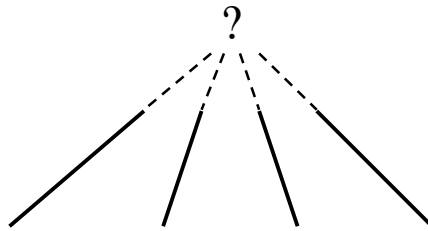
Figure 8. The vanishing point of the four *loci*.

Thus the four *loci* of the *CD* act as radiating spokes in a wheel where the hub and the outer circumference are invisible. But as dogmatics conducts its self-examination, it is led by each spoke to both its source and end in the "being of the Church," the *viva vox*, the living Word of God. Of course the hub and circumference cannot be fully addressed here in that they belong to the question of articulation, which will be addressed below. Before that, however, it is necessary to look at the role(s) of the parts in the *CD* as process.

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[111] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 877.

[112] Ibid., 877.

The Role(s) of the Parts of the *CD* as Process

As pointed out above in the section on the whole, the process represented by the structure of the *CD* is undoubtedly the "self-examination of the Church's talk about God."[113] As such, the parts relate to each other and to the whole according to how they answer the four questions of the *CD* as process: What is to be examined? Who can conduct this examination? How is this examination to be conducted? And, What will be the result? But more than any other factor, the parts of the *CD* as process relate in terms of how they answer the final question concerning the result of this process. In other words, each part's role is defined by its contribution to the conformity of the Church's speech in dogmatics with its criterion, the *Deus dixit*, and its effect on human speech and action.[114]

In contrast to the *ST*, the *CD* as process is more dialectical than narrative. That is, instead of a chronological sequence based on the natural order of discovery as in the *ST*, Barth argues that the process outlined in the *CD* begins with the "No" of God to human knowledge and proceeds to the "Yes" of human obedience, and finally to God's proclamation to the obedient hearer in faith.[115] In fact, Barth's process is hardly

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[113] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 3ff.

[114] Ibid., 12.

[115] "We have made a positive assertion, pronouncing a definite Yes to the knowability of the Word of God. This must be pointed out already at this first stage in our deliberations because proponents of an answer to the question on the basis of general anthropology usually bring against all that has been said the objection that God's Word and man are finally held apart or even 'rent asunder' thereby. In answer we argue that others ought not so stubbornly to hear only the No in what has been said. To be sure, what has been said denies a connection between God and man that is, a knowledge of God's Word by man, and thus a knowability of God's Word by him, in the sense that a capability of man in abstraction from the Word of God can serve as the condition of this connection. This condition, of course, cannot be met. The very man who knows the

sequential at all in that each "event" of God's speech is "*actus purus*" in the sense of a

concrete and discrete act that cannot be integrated with the events before or after it in a

sequence.[116] Thus, this process remains dialectical (or "gymnastic") in that in examining

its talk about God, Church dogmatics must constantly subject itself in obedience to the

freedom of the Word, acting anew and judging previous conceptions of the same.[117]

In fact, Barth explicitly addresses the contrast between the process represented by

the *CD* outlined above and the process described by Aquinas in the *ST*. Specifically,

Barth argues that the process of dogmatics recommended in the *CD* is mostly seeking the

same result as the *ST*:

Word of God also knows that he can bring no capability of his own to this knowledge, but has first to receive all capability. . . . Knowledge of God's Word becomes possible for man in the event of the reality of God's Word. . . . The man who really knows God's Word, as this man comes before us in the biblical promise, can understand himself only as one who exists in his act, in his self-determination. The Word of God comes as a summons to him and the hearing it finds in him is the right hearing of obedience or the wrong hearing of disobedience. . . . The possibility of knowledge of God's Word lies in God's word and nowhere else. In the absolute sense its reality can only take place, and it can do so only as a miracle before the eyes of every man, secular and religious, Greek and Jew. . . . This miracle is faith" (ibid., 196–198, 200–201, 222–223).

[116] "The only possibility of a conception of dogmatic knowledge remaining to us on the basis of Evangelical faith is to be marked off on the one hand by the rejection of an existential ontological possibility of the being of the Church and on the other hand by the rejection of the presupposition of a constantly available absorption of the being of the Church into a creaturely form, into a 'There is.' On the one side we have to say that the being of the Church is *actus purus*, i.e., a divine action which is self-originating and which is to be understood only in terms of itself and not therefore in terms of a prior anthropology. And on the other side we have also to say that the being of the church is *actus purus*, but with the accent now on *actus*, i.e., a free action and not a constantly available connection, grace being the event of personal address and not a transmitted material condition. On both sides we can only ask how it may be otherwise if the being of the Church is identical with Jesus Christ. If this is true, then the place from which the way of dogmatic knowledge is to be seen and understood can be neither a prior anthropological possibility nor a subsequent ecclesiastical reality, but only the present moment of the speaking and hearing of Jesus Christ Himself, the divine creation of light in our hearts" (ibid., 41).

At the beginning of his *Summa theologica* Thomas Aquinas has very finely said with regard to the object of theology: *Omnia pertractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei: vel quia sunt ipse Deus, vel quia habent ordinem ad Deum, ut ad principium, et finem.* And he explains correctly that this *tractare sub ratione Dei* must follow from the assumption of the *effectus Dei . . . loco definitionis.*[118]

But at this point Barth must depart from Aquinas with the challenge:

> If only he did not go on to say: its *effectus vel naturae vel gratiae*! It is clear that by the co-ordingation of divine working in both nature and grace this *effectus Dei* again loses its character as a final court of appeal. *Sub ratione Verbi Dei*—here our path diverges widely from that of Thomas—must mean *sub ratione Verbi Dei: Nullum aliud theologiae principium quam verbum Dei scriptum agnoscimus* [All things are treated under the principle of the Word of God: no other theological principles than the Word of God, established by Scripture].[119]

Therefore, Barth departs from Aquinas's approach especially in reaction to Aquinas's principle of the *analogia entis* (the analogy of being), which provides the basis for the *ST* as process by affirming a point of connection in human nature for a natural knowledge of God.[120] For Barth, there is no such "constantly available" point of connection in human nature, but that God's Word is knowable in the concrete event of Christian faith, through which "revelation itself creates of itself the necessary point of

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[117] Ibid., 78–79.

[118] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2,* 866.

[119] Ibid.

[120] "It [Roman Catholic Faith] affirms the presence of a divine likeness of the creature even in the fallen world, and consequently the possibility of applying the secular 'There is' to God and the things of God" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 41). Also, there are some who argue that "the *analogia entis* which Barth rejects is not to be found in Thomas" but that he is reacting against a broader Roman Catholic interpretation of Aquinas (Christopher Morse, "Raising God's Eyebrows: Some Further Thoughts on the Concept of the *Analogia Fidei*," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 27 [1981–1982]: 39; Battista Mondin, S. X., *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 2nd ed. [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968], 15ff.).

contact in man."[121] In other words, humans can have a knowledge of God, not through

the *analogia entis*, but rather through the *analogia fidei* (the analogy of faith):

> Our reply to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the *analogia entis* is not, then, a
> denial of the concept of analogy. We say rather that the analogy in question is not an
> *analogia entis* but according to Rom. 12:6, the ἀναλογία της πίστεως, likeness of
> the known in the knowing, of the object in thought, of the Word of God in the word
> that is thought and spoken by man.[122]

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[121] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 29, 41. "There is no human
knowing that corresponds to this divine telling. . . . At the beginning of this section we
said that we could investigate only the knowability and not the knowledge of God's
Word, because the knowledge of God's Word is no other than the reality of the grace of
God coming to man, whose How as a reality is as hidden from us as God Himself is, so
that we can only relate ourselves to it with our questions and answers. God has revealed
it and will always reveal it, and man may proclaim it. We cannot ask how that happens
but only, assuming that it does, how it can happen, how we are to understand it that men
become the subject or object of this event. Now this very question has led us back again,
and for the first time in full truth, to the event itself. We have found that the possibility
of the knowledge of God is absolutely grounded, implied and included in the event of its
actualization, and our Yes to this possibility is one long reference to this event. We
cannot produce this event and so we cannot give a basis for our reference; we could do so
only by producing the event to which it points and letting it speak for itself. Hence we
can only ask—and we certainly must ask—what the reference means in this context, how
far, in what sense, with what special necessity we refer to that event as the place where
the question of the knowability of the Word of God is decided. To the question so put the
answer is that we refer to this event as the event of faith. Faith—we could no longer
avoid the term at the end of our deliberations on experience in the third sub-section—is
the making possible of knowledge of God's Word that takes place in actual knowledge of
it" (ibid., 132, 227–228).

[122] Ibid., 243–244. "It [Barth's *analogia fidei*] is not an analogy between the
being of the Creator and the *being* of the creature—which Barth refers to an *analogia
entis* in contrast to an *analogia fidei*. The focus here is not being but rather a highly
concrete event: the event of revelation. Second, there is nothing in the being or knowing
of the human subject which helps to bring this event about—no capacity or pre-
understanding which might be seen as a necessary precondition to its occurrence. The
only capacity needed for the analogy is one which God Himself graciously provides in
the event of itself as a gift, namely faith. In the event of revelation, human knowledge is
made by grace to conform to its divine object. Thus (the reader will forgive an overused
metaphor, but it is good Barthian language), the direction in which the analogy works is
always 'above to below.' That is to say, God's Self-knowledge does not become
analogically related to a prior human knowledge of Him in revelation; rather, human
knowledge is conformed to His. God's act is the analogue, ours is the analogate; his the
archetype, ours the ectype. Third, the 'analogy of faith' is to be understood
'actualistically', that is, strictly as an event. The relation of correspondence which is

Thus, the self-examination of the Church's talk about God is a dialectical process beginning with (1) those involved in the task of dogmatics recognizing that there is no point of contact for a human knowledge of God; leading to (2) an attitude of obedience in faith to the event of God speaking as the criterion for dogmatics; and finally, with this criterion, (3) bringing about the revision and improvement of yesterday's dogmatics for today with the corresponding effect on those involved, leading to step one to begin the cycle again. Thus, from a responsible attendance to this process, the "unfolding of the Word of God" can be revealed in the structure of the parts of the *CD*. What has not yet been addressed here, however, is how these parts are articulated in Barth's work, to which we now turn.

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established in the revelation-event does not become a predicate of the human subject. To put it another way, the 'being' of the human subject is not altered through the experience of faith's knowledge of revelation. The analogy endures only so long as the revelation-event endures. Thus, the 'analogy of faith', once realized, does not pass over into human control. It must continue to be effected moment by moment by the sovereign action of the divine freedom if it is to be effected at all. The central area of theological reflection to which this understanding of analogy was applied by Barth is that of the relation of the content of revelation to human language (concepts and word). Barth's view is that human language in itself has no capacity for bearing adequate witness to God. If human language is nevertheless able to bear witness, it will only be because a capacity not intrinsic to it has been brought to it from without. But that is grace, not nature. In a gracious and sovereign act, God takes up the language of human witnesses and makes it to conform to Himself. God must therefore speak when spoken of by human witnesses if such witness is to reach its goal. He must reveal Himself in and through the 'veil' of human language. It is at this point the *inherently dialectical* character of the *analogia fidei* is clearly seen" (Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909–1936* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], 18).

**Articulation: What Is/Are the Principle(s)
of Articulation in the Internal
Structure of This System?**

Having identified the whole to be expected (a sequential treatment of the four

loci, the doctrines of the Word of God, creation, redemption, and reconciliation) and the

roles of the parts (in the structure and process of the *CD*) included within, the

articulation, through which the parts fulfill the expectation of the whole, can be explored.

As noted in the second chapter, the first step in answering this question is distinguishing

the internal articulation from the external.   The external articulation would be the

sequential treatment of the four *loci* reflected by the table of contents. At the internal

level, the parts are articulated, as a structure, into the four-spoke wheel with their

invisible, living center, the Word of God. Then, as a process, they are articulated within

the dialectic of the speaking God and listening Church.

In addition to the internal/external and structure/process aspects, the *CD* includes

another layer of articulation, that of Barth's specific treatment of dogmatics. In other

words, even if Barth's ideal of a dogmatics without a system is achieved, this denial itself

has an unavoidable architectonic impact upon the whole structure of the *CD,* which will

be discussed separately before drawing conclusions. Therefore, this section explores the

possible principle(s) that articulate the parts of the *CD* in its various aspects, beginning

with the aspect of process.

Articulation of the Parts as "Dogmatics"

Dogmatics describes the process of the self-examination of the Church's talk

about God. And as pointed out above, this process is 'dialectical.' Thus, in a way, it

defies articulation in that it carries at least the appearance of contradiction. As humans

we begin in contradiction to the God we wish to talk about.[123] As God, he is in

contradiction to us.[124] As a human endeavor, dogmatics is always a mixture of things that

cannot be integrated. Consequently for Barth, as the principle of articulation, the Word

of God actually dis-articulates what the principles of other systems synthesize.[125] In other

words, dogmatics, as a dialectical process, describes how God maintains the integrity of

what is said about him by constantly dis-integrating it as human knowledge.

Of course this brings us back to the challenge that the process of dogmatics is not

a system or a whole at all but only a series of a disjointed collection of contradictions, or

even 'gymnastics'. But it should be remembered that for Barth the unity of dogmatics is

not in the cognitive structure of the parts (doctrines, *loci*), but in their shared "object," the

Word of God.[126] Thus, in spite of the recurring contradictions and in spite of the fact that

the human side of this conversation changes—either literally from individual to

individual or in terms of knowledge and attitude—the divine side of this conversation is

always the Word of God. In the event of faith, it is always God who is speaking and the

Church who is listening. In this way, Barth is able to maintain unity in his dialectic, and

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[123] "The method prescribed for us by Holy Scripture not only assumes that the entelechy of man's I-ness is not divine in nature but, on the contrary, is in contradiction to the divine nature" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 7).

[124] "It ["the method prescribed for us by Holy Scripture"] also assumes that God is in no way bound to man, that His revelation is thus an act of His freedom, contradicting man's contradiction" (ibid.).

[125] "It [theology] cannot think of itself as a link in an ordered cosmos, but only as a stop-gap in a disordered cosmos" (ibid., 10).

[126] Ibid., 870.

as such the parts of the *CD* as process, the *loci* of dogmatics, are articulated through the dialectical principle of the "God who speaks" (*Deus dixit*).[127]

<p style="text-align:center;">Articulation of the Parts as "Dogma"</p>

Where the articulation of the parts as dogmatics described how the parts of *CD* are brought together in the process, dogma is how Barth describes their articulation in terms of structure. To Barth, while dogmatics are the *loci* and the individual statements that comprise them, true dogma on the other hand is "an eschatological idea, to which each particular dogmatic statement is only an approximation, which can neither anticipate nor conceal it."[128] In another section, Barth describes the distinction *semiotically* (in terms of a sign and what it signifies): "Dogma is the agreement of Church proclamation with the revelation attested in Holy Scripture. Dogmatics enquires into this agreement [process] and therefore into dogma."[129] Put another way, what is signified by dogmatics is not God alone, but the dialectic event of God's speaking and the Church hearing.

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[127] "But to say 'God with us' is to say something which has no basis or possibility outside itself, which can in no sense be explained in terms of man and man's situation, but only as knowledge of God from God, as free and unmerited grace. As the Bible bears witness to God's revelation and as Church proclamation takes up this witness in obedience, both renounce any foundation apart from that which God has given once and for all by speaking. The Bible and proclamation both appeal to this fact that has been given here and now. They cannot reproduce it as a given fact. They cannot bring it on the scene themselves. They can only attest and proclaim it. To bring it about that the *Deus Dixit* is present with the Church in its various times and situation is not in the power of the Bible or proclamation" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 120).

[128] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 865.

[129] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 265. "Dogma is what is intended in all possible propositions of this kind. It is the dogma for the sake of which the Church proclaims dogmas. Dogma is the essence of which dogmas and also dogmatic propositions, i.e., the propositions of dogmatic science, claim to be phenomena, the essence from which real dogmas and real dogmatic propositions may arise, i.e., when they are modeled on it. For the sake of dogma dogmatics must deal with dogmas. . . .

Consequently, in the cognitive structure of the *CD*, this dialectic event actually functions much like the articulating principles of traditional systems, in that this event acts as a principle that articulates the parts as a whole.[130] The difference is that this 'principle' is not a principle at all in the cognitive sense, but a "being" (person) and an "event" in the ontological sense.[131] Thus, each of these, the articulation as person and event, is addressed separately below.

The Principle of Articulation as Person

It is actually early in the first volume that Barth indicates the person-nature of the principle of articulation for the *CD*: "It (the Church) measures its action, its talk about God, against its being as the Church. . . . The criterion of past, future and therefore

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Dogma in the true and original sense as the epitome of all dogmas and dogmatic propositions is a concept of relation, and on the basis of it so, too, are dogmas and dogmatic propositions. The only difference in their case is that there is the proviso whether they are realized concepts of relation, i.e., concepts of a relation that is really present. What this relation is we know already; we refer to the relation of the agreement of Church proclamation with the Bible as the Word of God. One may thus define dogma as Church proclamation to the degree that it really agrees with the Bible as the Word of God . . . for dogma is Church proclamation that is really in agreement with the Word of God" (ibid., 268).

[130] "Concretely applied, all this means that the unfolding and presentation of the content of the Word of God must take place fundamentally in such a way that the Word of God is understood as the centre and foundation of dogmatics and of Church proclamation" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 869).

[131] "But what is required is its criticism and correction in the light of the being of the Church, of Jesus Christ as its basis, goal and content. . . . Talk about God has true content when it conforms to the being of the Church, i.e., when it conforms to Jesus Christ. . . . In dogmatics the Church has to measure its talk abut God by the standard of its own being, i.e., of divine revelation" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 6, 12, 28)

209

present Christian utterance is thus the being of the Church, namely, Jesus Christ."[132]

Later on he is more specific:

> God's Word means that God speaks. This implies . . . its personal quality. God's Word is not a thing to be described nor a term to be defined. It is neither a matter nor an idea. It is not "a truth," not even the very highest truth. It is *the* truth as it is God's speaking person, *Dei loquentis persona*. It is not an objective reality. It is *the* objective reality, in that it is also subjective, the subjective that is God.[133]

Thus, based on this concept of the principle of articulation being a person, Barth is in fact speaking of a system. But as his mentor Kierkegaard said, this system can only be such to its "subject," God, and it is known only through his Word, Jesus Christ.[134] But, in case we are tempted to reduce this person-principle to a cognitive-principle, Barth warns us that the Word of God cannot be contained thus.[135] Therefore, though the Word

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[132] Ibid., 4. It should also be noted here that Barth's identification of the principle of articulation with the person of Christ should not be understood in the sense of the principle or the being of the Church being "personal" in the sense of intimate or friendly. Regardless of his ideas about the intimacy of God's relationships with his creatures, in this aspect of his theology he is not talking about that. Rather he is talking about the medium of a knowledge of God and whether it can be had through principles or concepts or if it must be immediate in the sense of personal encounter, that is, we know God because we heard it from him personally, in person. Granted, this distinction is nuanced (personal vs. in person), but it must be maintained for a correct understanding of Barth on this point.

[133] Ibid., 136.

[134] "The equation of God's Word and God's Son makes it radically impossible to say anything doctrinaire in understanding the Word of God. In this equation, and in it alone, a real and effective barrier is set up against what is made of proclamation according to the Roman Catholic view and of Holy Scripture according to the later form of older Protestantism, namely, a fixed sum of revealed propositions which can be systematized like the section of a corpus of law. The only system in Holy Scripture and proclamation is revelation, i.e., Jesus Christ" (ibid., 137); "Much of the influence of Kierkegaard on him Barth sought later to tone down and sometimes to cut out altogether, but there is one important point which we must not fail to note: Kierkegaard's doctrine of the *Truth in the form of personal being*, Truth as Subject (not Truth as subjectivity, but as Subject-ivity)" (Torrence, *Karl Barth*, 45).

[135] "God confronts us as Creator, Mediator, and Redeemer, that as such He speaks and deals with us, that He is therefore God and Lord in this threefold way. This being of

of God functions as a principle in its articulation of the parts of the *CD* as in the

illustration of the spokes with their invisible hub, this principle cannot be comprehended

or manipulated as a cognitive-principle as it is in most cognitive systems.

In a way, the author of any cognitive system could be understood to function in

the same way, that is, as the person-principle of the articulation of their system. The

difference here is that, due to Barth's insistence on the absolute discontinuity between the

human mind and the mind of God, the only human access to the principle of the

articulation of a system of true dogma is in the person-to-person encounter with the Word

of God.[136] In the case of a human system, however, the principles used by the person who

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God in His work and activity is not a dogma, or a basic view, or a controllable principle which can be used as such for the construction of a system. It is the actuality of the Word of God, freely preceding and underlying all views and dogmas" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 879). "The call to discipleship binds a man to the One who calls him. He is not called by an idea of Christ, or a Christology, or a christocentric system of thought, let alone the supposedly Christian conception of a Father-God. How could these call him to discipleship? They have neither words nor voice. They cannot bind anyone to themselves. We must be careful that we do not conceal the living Jesus behind such schemata, fearing that the One who can issue this call, who has the words and voice to do it, and above all the right and authority and power to bind, might actually do so. Again, discipleship is not the recognition and adoption of a programme, ideal or law, or the attempt to fulfill it" (Barth, *Doctrine of Reconciliation, Part 1*, 536). "He [Barth] turns himself sharply against every abstract God-concept and against an independent theology of the first article of the Apostles' Creed (God as Creator). He will not acknowledge the legitimacy of a relatively independent knowledge of God which would *precede* the revelation of God in Christ" (Berkouwer, *Triumph*, 18).

[136] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 879. "It is all-important to realize that for Barth the Word of God refers to the most completely objective reality there is, for it is the Word of *God* backed with God's own ultimate Being. It is not only God's Word but God's Word as God himself says it—that is the Word which comes breaking into the circle of our subjectivity, our questions and our own answering, and assaults us as the great question of God to us. If it can be said that in the questions which we direct even toward God, it is ultimately we ourselves who are the question, then it can be said even with greater force that the question which God directs to us in his Word is his own Being, the downright actuality of God, the ultimate objectivity, the infinite obstacle which confronts us and which we cannot subdue to any form or our own subjectivity. This really transcendent, sovereignly free, objective Word of God, filled and backed up with

articulates their system can be known or deduced from their writings as the author and

reader are ontologically and epistemologically compatible.

Another caution Barth raises regards the temptation to interpret the "person" of

God from our understanding of ourselves as persons.[137] Rather, Barth insists that we

know what a person or a human being is by looking at Christ as a type of proto-person of

which we are pale imitations.[138] This is actually the basis for Barth's surprising

affirmation of Feuerbach's critique of Modern Liberal theology, claiming that it was just

"anthropology."[139] According to Barth, Feuerbach was correct even from the Christian

standpoint in that, in addition to the fact that Modern theology had basically reduced

theology to human intuition, with a proper understanding of human nature, "the true

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all the Godness of God, is the positive answer to immanentism. This Word of God is the proper object of theological activity, whether of the preacher or of the professor" (Torrence, *Karl Barth*, 96–97).

[137] "The real person is not man but God. It is not God who is a person by extension, but we. God exists in His act. God is His own decision. God lives from and by Himself" (Barth, *Doctrine of God, Part 1*, 271–272).

[138] "The ontological determination of humanity is grounded in the fact that one man among all others is the man Jesus" (Karl Barth, *CD*, vol. III-2, *The Doctrine of Creation, Part 2* (1960), 132). "Barth, in fact, means that if we want to know who and what the human being is, we are not in the first place to look to ourselves. Nor are we to begin with what the empirical sciences say about the human being; nor are we to orient ourselves to the phenomena of human existence past and present in an attempt to interpret the experiences which are there expressed. All this, according to Barth, can and must be thoroughly considered, acknowledged, and brought to light. It is, however, unsuited for *establishing theologically* what it is that constitutes the essential character of the human. We are not to learn who and what the human is by observing human beings and their history in general, but rather to do so in the concrete human person to whom, according to Christian faith, God bound himself and entered into human history" (Wolfe Krötke, "The Humanity of the Human Person in Karl Barth's Anthropology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, trans. Philip G. Ziegler [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 159).

[139] Karl Barth, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), xxvi.

sense of theology *is* anthropology, because the *anthropos* is Christ."[140] Accordingly, as

we get our understanding of our own personhood and humanity from the person of

Christ, the direction of communication in this encounter is still 'top-down' from above

and beyond.

Thus as the *CD* is articulated internally as a structure, it is done so through the

agency of the person of the Word of God. The effects of this articulation can be known

through the four *loci* similarly to the results of a cognitive principle of articulation,

though the principle itself cannot be known as a principle but only as a person. However,

dogmatics is possible inasmuch as the church is obedient to its "being," the person of the

Word of God which is also this person-principle of the articulation of true dogma. Of

course, obedience to a person over principle requires an encounter, which leads us to the

other aspect of the articulation of the internal structure of the *CD*, articulation as event.

The Principle of Articulation as the Event of Revelation

As demonstrated above, Barth insists that in order for dogmatics to accurately

represent true dogma, it must be the result of a person-to-person encounter with the Word

of God—not as a merely cognitive understanding of the historical idea of Christ or the

theological idea of the Word of God but as an encounter in *concretissimum*, that is, in the

most concrete, most real, sense.[141] But as pointed out earlier, from the human

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[140] Morse, "Raising God's Eyebrows," 43.

[141] "God's Word means the speaking God. Certainly God's Word is not just the formal possibility of divine speech. It is the fulfilled reality. It always has a very specific objective content. God always speaks *a concretissimum*. But this divine *concretissimum* cannot as such be either anticipated or repeated. What God speaks is never known or true anywhere in abstraction from God Himself. It is known and true in and through the fact the He Himself says it, that He is present in person in and with what is said by Him" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 136–137).

perspective, this encounter is not possible. Rather, it must be made possible from the

perspective of the divine.[142] Somehow God must bridge the gap between "heaven and

earth" so that he can speak and humans can hear what he is saying—revelation.[143]

Thus the event of revelation is twofold or in two stages. Looking at it in the

reverse, the latter stage is the God-speaking-human-hearing encounter. The first stage is

how this encounter is made possible, in the election of humanity by God in Christ. And it

is with this twofold event that the internal structure of the *CD* is most profoundly

articulated and which will now be examined in greater detail beginning with the latter

stage below.

The event of the *Deus dixit*

The latter stage in the event of revelation is God speaking to the human individual

and the individual hearing what is said, the *Deus dixit* (the God who speaks).[144] In this

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[142] "The method prescribed for us by Holy Scripture not only assumes that the entelechy of man's I-ness is not divine in nature but, on the contrary, is in contradiction to the divine nature. It also assumes that God is in no way bound to man, that His revelation is thus an act of His freedom, contradicting man's contradiction" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 7).

[143] "The question about the freedom of God for man and in man is the one which points most comprehensively and decisively to the two answers which we have to take up here. God is not prevented either by His own deity or by our humanity and sinfulness from being our God and having intercourse with us as with His own. . . . Revelation itself is needed for knowing that God is hidden and man blind. Revelation and it alone really and finally separates God and man by bringing them together. For by bringing them together it informs man about God and about Himself, it reveals God as the Lord of eternity, as the Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer, and characterizes man as creature, as sinner, as one devoted to death. It does that by telling him that God is free for us, that God has created and sustains him, that He forgives his sin, that He saves him from death. But it tells him that this God (no other) is free for this man (no other). If that is heard, then and not till then the boundary between God and man becomes really visible, of which the most radical skeptic and atheist cannot even dream, for all his doubts and negations. Since the boundary is visible, revelation, which crosses this boundary, is also visible as a mystery, a miracle, an exception" (ibid., 2, 29).

stage, its possibility secured by the first stage, God's Word breaks into human consciousness in the form of speech, human speech.[145] But the words, ideas, principles, etc., included in this encounter cannot be abstracted for the purposes of building a human replica of the divine system represented therein.[146] The hearer of God's Word cannot merely transcribe what is heard for those who didn't hear it. It is only truly revelation of God's Word for those who hear it "in *concretissimum*"—in *person*.[147] In other words, the only true "factum" of revelation is the encounter itself, without the speaking-hearing event, the content is just a "report."[148]

This is not to say that the hearer should not report on the encounter; on the contrary, whether in writing, preaching, or acting, Barth emphasizes the "commission" of

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[144] "It is the miracle of revelation and faith when the misunderstanding [regarding the human vehicles of revelation] does not constantly recur, when proclamation is for us not just human willing and doing characterized in some way but also and primarily and decisively God's own act, when human talk about God is for us not just that, but also and primarily and decisively God's own speech" (Barth, *CD*, I-1, 93); "Jesus Christ, then, the Word made flesh, is not only the Word as God utters it, but that same Word heard and uttered and lived out by Man. That is the Word we hear in the holy Scriptures, the Word of God in human form, which can be uttered by human lips, so that by the grace and power of Christ our uttering of the Word of God may also be God's own speech to men" (Torrence, *Karl Barth*, 105).

[145] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 93.

[146] Ibid., 136.

[147] Ibid., 136–137. "What God and His Word are, we can never establish by looking back and therewith by anticipating. This is something God Himself must constantly tell us afresh. But there is no human knowing that corresponds to this divine telling. In this divine telling there is an encounter and fellowship between His nature and man not an assuming of God's nature into man's knowing, only a fresh divine telling" (ibid., 132).

[148] "A system of Christian truth can be the task of dogmatics only to the extent that we are dealing with Christian truth that is proclaimed and is to be proclaimed, so that the exposition of it is less a system than the report of an event" (ibid., 280).

"proclamation" as the appropriate response to the hearing of the Word of God.[149] But the content of the written or spoken accounts of this encounter is not the Word of God but a report of the event of revelation. The hope, however, is that God in his absolute freedom, chooses to use the event of proclamation as a 'vehicle' of a fresh event of revelation wherein the hearer of the proclamation hears God himself speaking in and through the human speech of the proclamation.[150] This is the purpose of the Church and the goal of all its preaching, acting, and dogmatics.[151]

Thus, more specifically, this helps explain the task of dogmatics as the "self-examination of the Church's talk about God" in that it examines proclamation by comparing it to its criterion, the Word of God.[152] But, as shown above, this is not a comparison of proclamation to some authoritative doctrine or principle of the Word of God or Christology, but rather a comparison of proclamation to the concrete event of God speaking to a listening audience.[153] In other words it is the encounter not the content that

[149] "This is what the talk about God that is to be found in the Church seeks to be when it is meant to be proclamation and is thus directed to men with the claim and expectation that it has to declare to them the Word of God. It can and should aim to be proclamation as preaching and sacrament because the Church has a commission to make such proclamation" (ibid., 56).

[150] "Proclamation is human speech in and by which God Himself speaks like a king through the mouth of His herald, and which is meant to be heard and accepted as speech in and by which God Himself speaks" (ibid., 52).

[151] Ibid., 56.

[152] "Unless we have brought a criterion to this hearing, and applied it either well or badly, on the basis of previous experience of the reality of the Word of God reaching us somehow as commissioned proclamation" (ibid., 58).

[153] "According to our understanding of the matter, neither can theology as such claim to be proclamation. It, too, is talk about God to men. Proclamation, however, is its presupposition, its material and its practical goal, not its content or task" (ibid., 51). Some of Barth's commentators have termed this perspective "actualism": "Actualism is the most distinctive and perhaps the most difficult of the motifs. It is present whenever

216

provides the criterion for dogmatics to "criticize and correct" the proclamation of the Church. This is because the purpose of dogmatics to Barth is not the acquisition of the cognitive content of the Word of God, but the facilitation of a fresh person-to-person encounter with the "speaking God."[154] And in this way, though the system eludes human cognitive apprehension, we have access to its articulation through the "gymnastics" of dogmatics, bringing the concrete event of past revelation to bear on present proclamation.

Before moving back to the first stage of this event, however, it is important to point out that, to Barth, even though God is always the initiator of the encounter of hearing him speak, he can only be heard by those who are "in the church."[155] But this is not in terms of affiliation with an organization, but rather as a state of "obedience in faith."[156] In other words, those who are obediently listening to the Word of God through

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Barth speaks, as he constantly does, in the language of occurrence, happening, even, history, decisions, and act. At the most general level it means that he thinks primarily in terms of events and relationships rather than monadic or self-contained substances. So pervasive is this motif that Barth's whole theology might well be described as a theology of active relations. God and humanity are both defined in fundamentally actualistic terms" (Hunsinger, *How to Read*, 30).

[154] "It is the task of dogmatics to remind it [the Church] that the Word of God is not the Word of God if it is not *viva vox*" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 848).

[155] "In the concept of Church proclamation and hence also in that of dogmatics it is obviously taken for granted that it is possible for man to hear and even speak, and hence also to know, the Word of God. In these concepts this is assumed, of course, not for human existence generally, but for a specific sphere of human existence, namely, the sphere of the Church" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 187).

[156] "To be in the Church, however, is to be called with others by Jesus Christ. To act in the Church is to act in obedience to this call. This obedience to the call of Christ is faith" (ibid., 17). "Obedience is the concrete act of assenting to, following and carrying out another's will. This act implies hearing or, more properly, listening. It is an altogether different act, Barth claims, to hear another's words as a neutral or independent investigator than to listen to them as one who will be sent on her way by them. Both acts require hearing accurately, interpreting faithfully, recognizing properly the speaker of the words, but one listens in order to assent. Only one hears in the words a command; only

faith in Christ are "the Church" and, inasmuch as they are "in Christ" ("the being of the church"), they are able to hear God speak for Christ as the fitting recipient of God's speech.[157] But here, we have already breached the topic of the first stage of the event of revelation, the election of humanity in Christ.

The event of the election of humanity in Christ

To Barth, without the doctrine of the Trinity and its corollary in the election of Christ as he saw it, revelation and hence any knowledge of God would be impossible.[158] However, what sets the stage for a knowledge of God and dogmatics is not a doctrine at all but an "eternal" event[159] which is the ground and essence of all created reality.[160] But

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one believes that proper hearing can be attested only by the deed. Such contrasts are only heightened if the task can be divided between those who read texts and those who listen to a speaker. Barth holds that proper method in theology can only be the ready hearing of a living voice, a hearing that does not *lead* to action but is itself the first moment in an act of faith, a heartfelt handing over of the self to God" (Mike Higton and John C. McDowell, *Conversing with Barth* [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004], 197).

[157] "Primarily and originally the Word of God is undoubtedly the Word that God speaks by and to Himself in eternal concealment" (Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 191). Of course this seems to hint at the next subsection which Barth was aware of himself: "We shall have to return to this great and inalienable truth when we develop the concept of revelation in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity" (ibid.).

[158] "Since the One who unveils Himself is the God who by nature cannot be unveiled to men, self-unveiling means that God does what men themselves cannot do in any sense or in any way" (ibid., 315). "There is real knowledge of God in the power of His self-demonstration. But this self-demonstration is His revelation as the triune God. We know God in consequence of God knowing Himself—the Father knowing the Son and the Son the Father by the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son. Because He is first and foremost knowable to Himself as the triune God, He is knowable to us as well" (Barth, *Doctrine of God, Part 1*, 67).

[159] "Our starting-point is that this 'God with us' at the heart of the Christian message is the description of an act of God, or better, of God Himself in this act of His. It is a report, not therefore of a statement of fact on the basis of general observation or consideration. God with us, or what is meant by these three words, is not an object of investigation or speculation. It is not a state, but an event" (Barth, *Doctrine of Reconciliation, Part 1*, 6).

for our purposes here the eternal, universal event of the election of Christ is what makes

the particular, concrete event of the hearing of God's speaking "in time," and thus

dogmatics, possible.[161]

Consequently, when Barth refers to the "centre and foundation" of the parts of

dogmatics (their articulation), he is referring specifically to this person-principle, which

he identifies as the "Word of God."[162] The Word of God cannot be understood or

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[160] "In the beginning, before time and space as we know them, before creation, before there was any reality distinct from God which could be the object of the love of God or the setting for His acts of freedom, God anticipated and determined within Himself (in the power of His love and freedom, of His knowing and willing) that the goal and meaning of all His dealings with the as yet non-existent universe should be the fact that in His Son He would be gracious towards man, uniting Himself with him" (Barth, *Doctrine of God, Part 1*, 101).

[161] "From eternity and in eternity God is knowable to Himself. For this reason and in this way He is also knowable among us and for us. It is because this is also that the foundation of our knowledge of God is so sure, and the knowledge of God such a powerful and irresistible event. How can there be opposition, how can there be doubt and difficulty, when we have to do with the actualization of an eternal possibility, God's own possibility?" (ibid., 67). "A true theology will act only in response to election, that is, in the recognition that it does not know God by virtue of its own ideas and concepts or by the inner power of its own dialectic, and therefore in acknowledgement that its own thought is inadequate to its object and its own ideas and concepts are unfitted to express and convey knowledge of him. But to act in response to election means also to act in joyful recognition of the fact that God has chosen to be served by theology, questionable instrument that it is, for it has pleased him as the One who transcends the contradiction of my existence and my thought, to come as Revealer and Reconciler, to take my place, and so to actualize my knowledge of him from my side" (Torrence, *Karl Barth*, 169–170).

[162] "Every theological proposition in the *Church Dogmatics* thus has its point of departure in Jesus Christ. It is this feature of Barth's later thought which has led to it being described as 'Christological concentration' or 'Christomonism.' Barth is not actually suggesting that the doctrine of either the person or work of Christ (or both, if they are deemed inseparable) should stand at the centre of a Christian dogmatics, nor that a Christological idea or principle should constitute the systematic speculative midpoint of a deductive system. Rather, Barth is arguing that the act of God which is Jesus Christ underlies theology in its totality. A 'Church Dogmatics' must be 'Christologically determined' in that the very possibility and reality of theology are determined in the first place by the actuality of the act of divine revelation, by speaking of the Word of God, by

comprehended as a concept, doctrine, or principle but as a concrete person who, as both

"very God and very man," has bridged the impossible gulf between heaven and earth and

as such all of reality, truth, and dogma is integrated in him.[163]

In its simplest and most comprehensive form the dogma of predestination consists, then, in the assertion that the divine predestination is the election of Jesus Christ. But the concept of election has a double reference—to the elector and to the elected. And so, too, the name of Jesus Christ has within itself the double reference: the One called by this name is both very God and very man. Thus the simplest form of the dogma may be divided at once into the two assertions that Jesus Christ is the electing God, and that He is also elected man.[164]

Notice also the "double-election," Christ is the "electing God" and the "elected

man." Consequently, as such, Christ is simultaneously God's-Word-speaking and the

Being-of-the-Church-listening so that we, by faith in Him, can be the recipients of divine

utterance and participate in the ontological system, which is the basis of the cognitive

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the event of Jesus Christ" (Alister McGrath, *A Scientific Theology: Reality* [London: T & T Clark, 2002], 232).

[163] "Two things must be said here. Both against Roman Catholicism and against Neo-Protestantism, Barth asserts the ultimate reality of the Word of God as *Word*. The only God whom we know is this God who comes to us in his Word, not a God without his Word, not a Word without the reality and actuality of God, but a Word who is God, and a God who as Word has become Man. Barth will have nothing to do, therefore, with some imaginary realm above and beyond the Word where there takes place some wordless vision or a-logical experience of God; nor will he have anything to do with the God who is defined as Schleiermacher defined him, a God who is ultimately dumb, and whom we know only through examining and analyzing our own feelings and determinations of soul, and so put words into God's mouth through interpreting our religious sensations. No, God comes to us as Word himself, Word who is independent of our awareness and mystical experiences, who is not the correlate or determinant of our feeling of absolute dependence, who is sovereignly free from the circle of our subjectivity and exalted above it all. Rather is he the Word who assaults our subjectivity, who tears it wide open by his address, and relates us to himself beyond ourselves, to a real Word of address, a genuine objective communication, who breaks into our monologue with ourselves and assumes us into dialogue with himself" (Torrence, *Karl Barth*, 97–98).

[164] Barth, *Doctrine of God, Part 1*, 103.

systems which attempt to describe it.[165] In fact, like the *analogia fidei*, Barth sees this

explanation of the inner/outer relationships of God with himself and of Christ with

humanity as another answer to Aquinas's *analogia entis*, which he calls the *analogia*

relationis.[166]

In this way Barth seems to achieve a solution to the problem of discontinuity

raised by Kierkegaard by interpreting the double-election of Christ as a transcendental

principle. That is, as the electing God, he is able to articulate the parts of existence as a

finished, complete system, while as the elected "being of the Church" he is able to

convey at least the effects of that completeness to humanity. And as such, being both the

principle of articulation within the system and being the link to a greater context without,

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[165] "Jesus Christ is the electing God; Jesus Christ is the elected man. It may be said that the whole of Barth's doctrine of predestination is summarized in this twofold proposition" (Otto Weber, *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics: An Introductory Report on Volumes I:1 to III:4* [London: Lutterworth Press, 1953], 94). "In his understanding of the human subject as an object posited by God, Barth came to construct a hierarchical system of religious communication in which there is, first, the inner world of the Trinity, God's relationship with humanity through Christ, the relationship of Jesus to humanity and finally humanity's own communication" (Bryan S. Turner, "Religious Speech: The Ineffable Nature of Religious Communication in the Information Age," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 25 [2008]: 231).

[166] Barth, *Doctrine of Creation, Part 3*, 220; "*Analogia relationis*, as Barth uses the phrase, means that the relation of God to man which is realized in the Christ has ontological analogy to another relation—the relation of God to himself. More explicitly there is a fundamental correspondence between the 'external' relation of God to man in the historical life of the Christ and the 'internal' relation of God to himself in the Trinitarian life in which the Christ participates. *Analogia relationis* is Barth's way of saying that what is known in and through the linguistic tradition connected with Jesus is not just a subject matter in the sense of a piece of information, but the reality of God as such. God, in Christ, is radically finalized—although not thereby available for objectification! The historical, linguistic form of the Christ is inseparable from— although not 'identical with,' as in the assertive language of so-called objective judgment—the essential, revealed content of the being of God" (Dale Stover, "Linguisticality and Theology: Applying the Hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 5 [1975–1976]: 42).

221

the Word of God makes an existential system possible. Of course, here we have touched

on the key condition to the meaning of system as it is used in theology as implied in the

previous chapters, which will have to be addressed more fully in the concluding chapter.

In summary of this section, based on the foregoing material, the parts of the *CD*

can be said to be articulated at the internal level by the principle of the Word of God as

both person and event in the reality of the eternal, double-election of Christ. That is,

through the *analogia relationis*, Christ is chosen to be the point of contact between God

and humanity; and through the *analogia fidei*, humanity is chosen to hear God's speech.

As such, in the concrete experience of the elect, the content of the Word of God is

articulated as a whole with "definiteness and coherence," even if it cannot be expressed

as a system strictly defined.

Before drawing conclusions, a caution should be raised. I have analyzed the *CD*

as a "system" on the basis that, though it is not a "closed" system articulated by cognitive

"principles," it fulfills the intensional definition in the second chapter. But Barth's

insistence that the *CD* is not a system and that systems do injustice to the true content of

dogma should be reconsidered in light of the foregoing analysis. That is, if reality or

knowledge can only be a system to God, and is mediated to humans in the form of

concrete personal encounters, which cannot be systematized cognitively, there can be no

theological system (or any other kind of cognitive system for that matter). And, if there

had been no *Kirchliche Dogmatik* after *Der Römerbrief* this argument might stand.

Considering the extensiveness of the *CD*, however, Barth's argument is challenged by his own "definiteness and coherence."[167] More specifically, the *CD* is an elaborate cognitive system about theology, but the theology it describes is not intended to be presented as a system. And while, according to Barth, the principle of the articulation of dogma is not a principle but the person of Christ, which is not cognitively accessible, the principle of articulation in Barth's system about dogma has a distinct, accessible cognitive principle.

The Articulation of the *CD* as "Barth's System"

It has already been pointed out that around the time he began the *CD*, Barth concedes to his overall thought being a 'system' of sorts in that it all stems from the conviction that he shares with Kierkegaard regarding the "infinite qualitative distinction between time and eternity," that "God is in heaven, and thou art on earth."[168] And in spite

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[167] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, 868–869. "Barth does not believe in systematization but here, as elsewhere in his *Church Dogmatics*, he obviously has no objection to systematizing. He makes no single doctrine the center. He focuses constantly on the Trinitarian work that comes to expression in the person and work of Christ. Nevertheless, he elaborately integrates the many and varied elements in reconciliation in such a way as to see and understand it as an interrelated and comprehensive whole" (Berkouwer, *Triumph*, 179).

[168] Barth, *Romans*, 10. "It is evident, therefore, how central is the place of the crisis-motif in the *Römerbrief*. It indicates distance, it signalizes the judgment in all its ominous and limiting character, it indicates the infinite distance between God and man, and the radical condemnation of every synthesis between the two that is effected from man's side" (Berkouwer, *Triumph*, 29). "Behind modern theology there lay a basic naturalistic *Weltanshcauung* which was always diluting and transforming Christianity from behind, making it incapable of critical and creative impact upon the world and so rendering it harmless; rather did it bend Christianity to serve man's own natural satisfactions and desires. Against this Barth put forward a radically different outlook marked by the seriousness with which it took original sin, and the courage with which it looked into and faced deep desperate disharmonies in man's existence revealed in the agonies of his guilt, and failure, and death. And therefore against the evolution and immanentism of that theology he opposed a dynamic eschatology of death and

of his denial of cognitive access to the source of the articulation of dogma, it can be argued that his *CD* as a system is clearly articulated with this principle of the gulf between God and humanity as the starting point and stage for both the structure and process of the dogmatics treated therein.[169] Hence, whether he intended it or not, every element of the *CD* can be articulated under this principle, even the element of there being no principle![170]

For example, the doctrine of the Word of God is articulated by this principle in that God's Word is always in contradiction with human speech, which requires the need for revelation through the reality of the Trinity and the event of the election of Christ. Of course the doctrine of redemption is simply the bridging of this gulf and the doctrine of reconciliation is the restoration of the union of God and humanity. But even with the doctrine of creation, the principle of discontinuity is presupposed within as the "internal basis of creation."[171]

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resurrection, of judgment and grace, and called to his aid the teaching of the early Luther of the God who slays us and makes us alive, who takes us to heaven but only by first taking us down to hell, the God of the Yes and the NO and of the NO by the Yes as of the Yes through the No. In other words, Barth's theology took a dialectical form because he had to shatter the basic axiom of an immanent continuity between man and God, and yet affirm man just as really and realistically as he affirmed God" (Torrence, *Karl Barth*, 84).

[169] "The relation between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy" (Barth, *Romans*, 10).

[170] Here we are reminded of Hunsinger's conviction that "the more deeply one reads Barth, the more one senses that his use of repetition is never pointless. Rather it serves as a principle of organization and development within an ever forward spiraling theological whole" (Hunsinger, *How to Read*, 28).

[171] Karl Barth, *CD*, vol. III-1, *Doctrine of Creation, Part 1*, trans. G. H. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (1986), 228ff. "Barth's Christocentric 'dialectical theology,' announced in the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (1919) and elaborated in the uncompleted *Church Dogmatics* (1932–67), argues that all man-made understandings of the world are false. Existentialists like Heidegger and Sartre sensed the problem, but not

Actually, Barth uses this concept much the same way Aquinas uses the *analogia entis* but instead of it being an ontological link shared by all, the *analogia fidei* reminds us that there is no such link and we are utterly dependent on God speaking or we hear nothing.[172] Thus, instead of turning us to our world to find God and confirm Scripture as in the *ST*, Barth turns us to the absence of God in this world and our helplessness without him, which might make room for God to speak in his freedom and to articulate our knowledge of him himself. In fact, it can be said that this principle is the basis for what is wrong with the principle of *analogia entis*, or what is wrong with modern theology, or any other "basic view of things."[173] That is to say, in order to agree with Barth's criticism of other views of theology or philosophy, one has to accept his *analogia fidei*, and more specifically its corresponding principle of discontinuity, as a basic view.

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its solution: we can only know ourselves as sinful, and this only through Christ, who defeated evil: 'the incarnation of the Word of God was obviously not necessary merely to reveal the goodness of God's creation.' Evil, which Barth defines as *das Nichtige* (barely translatable as 'nothingness'), is neither the Creator nor the creation; arising with creation, it is what God does not choose. Not just nonbeing, it constitutes an incomprehensible menace to creation" (Mark Joseph Larrimore, *The Problem of Evil: A Reader* [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004], 348).

[172] "For the theologian, the happening of Revelation is the most concrete reality for man; it is 'act,' and everything natural that precedes and participates in this happening is 'potency.' The summons of God's Word to man is the highest reality, and we must start out from there rather than from nature. To know the nature of man, we must find out what he looks like in God's eyes rather than trying to draw a line between the natural and the supernatural. . . . Contrary to what we may think, concrete reality is not our particular patch of time; it is the Word of God which reigns over us at every moment" (von Balthasar, *Theology*, 165).

[173] "At this boundary all illusions, moral and religious, are exposed *as* illusions, because they were the point of departure for the supposition that God and man are partners, that they walk together on a plane of equality, which is nothing less than 'the worst perversion of the truth.' The crisis consists in this, that man in *all* his endeavors stands under the condemnation of the radical No of the true and living God, the No of His holy judgment in the presence of which man cannot live, but can only *die*" (Berkouwer, *Triumph*, 27).

Also, this is in stark contrast to the *circulatio* in the *ST* in which creation arises from its first principle and moves relatively seamless in a circle to its final principle in reconciliation. In the *CD*, the one constant is discontinuity: ontological discontinuity between human and divine reality and epistemological discontinuity between human knowledge and divine truth.[174] But even when God does reveal himself, there is discontinuity between that event and every previous or subsequent event of revelation.[175] And there is definitely discontinuity between these events and any attempt to codify them. This is illustrated in the figures above, which are characterized by lines with undetermined origins and ends. Consequently, Barth's persistent principle of discontinuity is what requires the impossibility of system and the inaccessibility of any principle of articulation in the content of dogmatics. At the same time, however, Barth's principle of discontinuity—his "basic view of things"—is the systematizing basis and architectonic for his Christological non-system of theology and as such acts as the postulate for his overall system of thought.[176]

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[174] "Barth stresses this principle of discontinuity in his *Church Dogmatics*, especially in the volume on the doctrine of the word of God. . . . Not only does the event of the Word of God stand in discontinuity with all human thought and experiences, it also stands altogether apart from them" (Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 87–88).

[175] Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 1*, 137.

[176] "'God is in heaven, and thou art on earth.' The relation between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy" (Barth, *Romans*, 10). "This crisis is discussed not only in the two sections whose titles include the word, but everywhere the thought of crisis recurs as an indication of the crisis of 'eternity' over 'time,' as the judgment of God over every effort of man to find in one manner or another, a way to God that shall begin with himself. In the foreward [*sic*] of the second edition Barth speaks of his true purpose, namely, 'to keep constantly before us in its negative and positive meaning' the qualitative-infinite difference between God and man. He wanted to emphasize, against

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter Barth's *CD* has served as a case study for the architectonic analysis introduced in chapter 2 as an instrument to analyze and compare systems of theology. Here, already in the first question regarding the systematicity of the *CD*, a challenge was presented in that Barth enthusiastically denied the possibility of the content of theology being expressed or comprehended as a "system." Thus it was necessary to show how Barth's definition of system was particularly more narrow than the one provided in chapter 2 and that in spite of his protestations, his *CD* met the requirements of being a whole of articulated theological doctrines even if that articulation was mystical. Therefore, the *CD* could definitely be considered a "theological system" and as such it was a legitimate candidate for the architectonic analysis.

Having determined the suitability of the *CD* as a "system" to be analyzed, its aspects of whole, parts, and articulation were addressed in detail. In the sections on the whole and parts it was shown that the *CD* is best understood in the dual-aspects of system as structure (the four *loci*) and system as process (the "self examination of the church's talk about God"—dogmatics).

As a structure, the whole to be expected is a comprehensive treatment of the four *loci*: the doctrine of the Word of God, the doctrine of creation, the doctrine of redemption, and the doctrine of reconciliation. Also, these *loci* with their sub-topics make up the necessary parts to the cognitive structure of the *CD*. But, unlike the *ST* discussed in the previous chapter, none of the four *loci* can act as independent founding

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every overstepping of the boundaries, that *God* is in the heavens and that *we* are men upon the earth. The 'crisis' of the reality of God is the radical, universal, and permanent

principles for the whole or any other part. As such, the *loci* as the parts of the *CD* are

dependent and necessary both to each other and to the whole, according to the categories

introduced in the second chapter.

However, there is one part that is independent and necessary: that is the *person* of

Christ, the Word of God, who cannot be included in any cognitive structure of dogmatics

because it would destroy his freedom to act on the behalf of creation. And here, probably

more directly than in any other source in this study, the conditioning element of

transcendence is identified. In the double-election of Christ, Barth makes room in

Christian theology for a part which is within and without the system. This part provides

the principle of articulation of all the other parts within the system while being a link to a

larger context without. And in so doing, Barth is attempting to provide an alternative to

the pantheistic or monistic systems in which the source of transcendence is somehow

integral to human nature. Rather for Barth this link is only possible in the God-man;

Christ and humans can participate therein only through a mystical union with him in the

Church.

In terms of articulation, it was shown there are two distinct layers involved in the

structure of the *CD*. In the layer of content, Barth insists that there can be no principle of

articulation, and thus no system. With Kierkegaard he allows the possibility that truth

and reality is a system to God, but that this is impossible for humans and thus dogmatics

will always be this awkward "gymnastic" treatment of the four *loci*. At the layer of

Barth's particular treatment of this content, however, he seems to utilize a specific

principle to articulate the *CD* as a cognitive whole, the *analogia fidei* or principle of

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crisis, it is the judgment of God over all human righteousness. Never, never, is man able

discontinuity. And with this principle, Barth constructs a comprehensive architectonic system about theology in order to successfully dis-articulate any attempt at a cognitive system of theology.

Before moving on to the final conclusions of this study, however, the *CD* has raised some issues that require attention. First, there is the 'given-ness' of Barth's principle of discontinuity. How does this escape his own criticism of "organizing principles" or a "basic view of things"? Isn't Barth's principle of discontinuity a cognitive principle that serves as a postulate or rule that governs how we expect God to relate to us? Does this postulate protect God's freedom any more than Aquinas's *analogia entis*? Doesn't this principle imply a type of natural theology based on a basic view of the nature of this world in which the nature of the divine is incompatible? If theology is to be truly based on a concrete person-to-person encounter with God, prior to any cognitive principle as criteria, the principle of discontinuity limits God's freedom in such an encounter.

The second issue is that, in spite of the challenge above, Barth raises a point about the role of person in system that requires the concept of cognitive systems to be expanded to address the relational context of thought generally, and specifically, of the systematicians themselves in their role in the articulation. This is demonstrated dramatically in the dual-layers of the *CD* in terms of systems of the "content of dogmatics" vs. systems about dogmatics. As such, any discussion of system is conditioned by dual roles of participant and observer, neither of which can be forfeited without compromising the integrity of the whole, which brings us back to transcendence.

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to obliterate this distinction or to cross this dividing line" (Berkouwer, *Triumph*, 26).

Probably more than any other aspect of Barth's usage of this term, the absolute condition of transcendence comes through as a non-negotiable element in the meaning of "system" as it is used in theology. And, when coupled with Aquinas's corresponding emphasis on the idea of *analogia entis*, which integrates the divine perspective into the system of theology apprehended by humanity, this aspect seems to be integral to the meaning of system. Hence, from these two examples demonstrating the function of system in theology, it is suggested that the meaning of system in theology requires some type of insider/outsider perspective as a transcendental element, which is neither questioned nor proved by the system itself. Rather this element acts as an axiom or given which links the local system with some greater context. For Barth, this element is the principle of discontinuity, which provides the basis for his doctrine of the Word of God. For Aquinas, however, this element is the *analogia entis*, which provides the basis for his doctrine of the *circulatio*. Thus, the meaning of system should be expanded to account for this phenomenon arising from these two examples, which will be addressed in the conclusions in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

In the attempt to clarify the meaning and demonstrate the function of the concept

of system in theology, this study has completed two primary phases in the process of

arriving here at its conclusions. The first phase established the meaning of this term in its

philosophical and theological contexts, and the second phase demonstrated the function

of the same in specific examples of Aquinas's *ST* and Barth's *CD*. The first phase was

completed entirely in the second chapter, while the second was divided between the third

and fourth chapters. More specifically, the first phase involved three secondary steps: the

historical/etymological development of the term "system" as it is used in theology and

philosophy, the proposal of an intensional definition with discussion of the individual

elements involved, and finally the outline of the recommended instrument of analysis to

be used in the second phase. The second phase involved two secondary steps: the

application of the architectonic analysis to the *ST* and *CD*.

In the first step of the first phase it was shown that the term "system" was not

used, as it is presently in theology and philosophy, until the first part of the seventeenth

century and especially with its introduction by Bartholomew Keckermann in his *Systema

Locici*. It was also pointed out that Keckermann's innovation in his usage of this word

was a marriage of sorts of the Ramist method and Aristotelian content to improve the didactic success of the latter.

Among other priorities, it was shown that Keckermann, in his introduction of this term, was attempting to show the unity and 'wholeness' of the apparently haphazard chaos of what was then known of Aristotle's writings. And it was also shown that, in these efforts, he outlines the basic elements used to define system ("a whole of conjoined parts") and set the stage for the dual-aspect of structure and process for future understandings of cognitive systems. From there, each subsequent innovation in the usage or application of this term to theology and philosophy was briefly highlighted through to the decline in its usage towards the end of the nineteeth century.

In the centuries that followed Keckermann, each contributor provided more insight into this concept and its function in theology and philosophy. Malebranche clarified that the recognition of a cognitive system is a faculty of the mind or it would be impossible. Leibniz told us that articulation doesn't have to always be from without on passive parts, but that the parts themselves could play an active role in the fulfillment of the expected whole. Wolff reminded us that, even if the system were constructed from an external 'builder', the parts must be integrated according to their respective natures and relationship to the whole, much like the organs in the human body. Then Lambert, who provided probably more attention to this topic than any of his peers, provided a comprehensive typology of different types of systems and especially cognitive systems.

The most direct discussion of system in this context, however, came from Kant who carefully explained the idea of the "architectonic principle" and its crucial role in the methodological understanding of system as it had been used in theology and philosophy,

232

specifically, that this principle contains "the end and the form of the whole which is in accordance with that end."[1] It was also he who affirmed the basic reduction of all the elements of system to its three constituents: "manifoldness [parts], affinity [articulation], unity [whole]."[2] Finally, he argued for the one-sidedness of the phenomenon of system being a subjective category that is projected on the objects of knowledge and that the drive to do so is the proper function of our aesthetic judgment. Consequently, the definition and explanation of system provided here is probably more dependent on Kant than any of the other contributors. But he was not the last word.

If Kant provided the most direct explanation of the meaning of system, Hegel provided the most ambitious application of the function of system to theology and philosophy. Without being fazed by Kant's limitations for metaphysics, Hegel plunged ahead in constructing the foundation to a complete system of all knowledge and being based on his own principle of science and the dialectic process of history.   In this great system, he charted the process, beginning with the objectification and disintegration of the Absolute and its subsequent re-integration through time until a final unification and ultimate triumph of science and knowledge.

But even as this pinnacle was reached, a strong critique was beginning to cast a shadow on the mounting optimism of the enlightenment and its precious systems. Thus, before concluding the etymological development of this term in theology and philosophy, the detractors were discussed with special emphasis on Kierkegaard's existential critique of systems in general and Hegel's system in particular. And from this critique it was

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[1] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 466, 467.

[2] Ibid., 371.

shown that there seems to be an inherent condition to the idea of system that requires the perspective of being inside and outside the whole simultaneously, which, in his opinion, was only possible for God. Thus, it was shown that the limitations of this condition could only be avoided by pantheistic or panentheistic systems (Spinoza, Leibniz, Hegel, etc.).

Finally, from the ground of its etymological development, a preliminary intensional definition of the term "system" was suggested with special emphasis on the elements implied therein. Thus, the elements of whole, parts, and articulation were looked at separately as the necessary components of any usage of this term especially in theology. Then, equipped with these elements of definition, the architectonic analysis was outlined as an instrument useful for analyzing particular theological systems and clarifying the meaning of the term system as it is used in theology in general. And with this instrument, it was possible to move on to the specific examples of Aquinas and Barth to demonstrate the function of system in these great expressions of theology. But in order to keep this analysis focused, it was not the overall thought or ontological systems implied that was the object of analysis, but rather just the specific works of the *ST* and the *CD* analyzed as cognitive systems of theology.

In the third chapter the architectonic analysis was applied to Aquinas's *ST* with separate discussions of each of the four questions involved. And, though Aquinas never used the word "system" (*systema* in Latin) to describe his work, it was shown that the *ST* was certainly a system of theology and a viable candidate for the architectonic analysis. Then the *ST* was analyzed in terms of its whole, parts, and articulation, concluding with the discussion of the *circulatio* as the principle of articulation.

After the analysis of the elements of system in the *ST*, the meaning of system was revisited in light of this particular example. As a result, it was pointed out that, in addition to being a whole of articulated theological doctrines, the *ST* included some parts (the *analogiae entis*, the doctrine of the four causes, his overall understanding of Being, etc.) that were independent and necessary to the other parts and whole. And as the *ST* unfolded in both structure and process, these particular doctrines were not in question or being confirmed by the system.[3] Rather, it was the other, dependent-necessary parts (doctrines) of the *ST* that were being explained with the doctrines above providing the foundation and axioms in the logical structure of the system.

Even the complex principle of *circulatio*, though integral and demonstrated within the *ST*, was shown to be dependent on these more fundamental principles, which remained unchallenged. Of course this is not to mean that Aquinas did not discuss the validity of these principles in his other works, which he certainly did, but that in the *ST*, as a particular system, these principles functioned as givens, which were posited without questioning. And the *ST* as a system seems to be dependent on certain parts that are not established by it but which provide the basis for the demonstration of its other parts, even if those foundational parts are seen as coming from one of Aquinas's other systems.

Furthermore, within the *circulatio*, equipped with these transcendental sub-principles, there is an expectation of the whole, which is fulfilled by both the structure and process of the *ST*. In a universe where there is only being, everything is either more or less participating in that singularity and either moving away from or towards absolute Being, which is the first and final cause of all there is. And this meta-explanation ("basic

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[3] Aquinas provided limited explanation of these but never in the sense of them

view of things") is available for knowledge thanks to the postulate of the *analogiae entis*. And from the *circulatio*, this capsulated kernel of the whole that anticipates the overall system of the *ST*, every Christian doctrine can be explained and articulated to fulfill this expectation.

Moving on from Aquinas to Barth's *Church Dogmatics* in the fourth chapter, it was first shown that, though he disavowed this work being a "system," it was in fact a theological system and a valid candidate for the architectonic analysis. And, as in the *ST*, the other three questions were addressed concerning the whole, parts, and articulation of the *CD*, with special emphasis on Barth's own principle of articulation being his anti-system discontinuity between the objective content of theology and its subjective observers. Of course, like Kierkegaard, Barth points out that from God's perspective, theology can certainly be a unified system while He is its center and principle of articulation. But for human theologians, this unity, articulation, center, etc., are all out of reach, and this very disconnect becomes the new center and principle of articulation from the human perspective.

Thus, more than any other since Kierkegaard, Barth highlights the condition in the meaning of system, which requires this element within the system that can only be occupied by a transcendent element.[4] Ironically, in the very system he uses to explain this, he includes his own principle of discontinuity, which is explicitly postulated and not subject to evaluation within. As such, the *CD*, regardless of its acceptance or validity, could possibly be the most honest of theological systems.

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being the focus of an argument to be proved, etc.

[4] It should be remembered that Kierkegaard was directly credited by Barth in his answer to the accusation of whether he has his "own system."

Conclusions

From the above steps of the etymological development, the intensional definition, and the architectonic analysis of the *ST* and *CD*, the following general conclusions are proposed: anything described as a theological system should (1) include at least the elements of whole, parts, and articulation, and (2) these elements will be evident in both aspects of structure and process represented by the whole.

In addition to these general characteristics, this study argues that at the deeper level of the meaning of the term "system" as it is used in theology, there is a transcendental conditioning element. In other words, anything called a "theological system" is: (1) conditioned by at least one independent, necessary doctrine which is either included or implied within, (2) that this doctrine is an axiomatic, *a priori* expectation of the whole that is subsequently represented by the system in question, and therefore, (3) a theological system is always conditioned by some transcendental principle not derived from the system itself. Subsequently, each of these three points will be addressed in greater detail below.

The Conditioned Nature of Theological Systems

As it is, the definition—"a whole of articulated theological knowledge"— proposed in the second chapter could be considered to apply to almost anything in that, in one way or another, any expression of theology could be accurately described as such. However, due to the metaphysical nature of its content, one or more of the parts of any given system of theology condition the nature of that particular expression of theology. For example, as was shown above, if one of the parts dictates the unity of being

(Aquinas, Spinoza, Hegel), all reality must be accounted for in the system of theology. If, on the other hand, one of the parts insists that objective reality cannot be known in itself (Kant), then any sense of system is to be understood as a subjective projection. Or there can be some duality of incompatible realities (Barth), which would limit any system to be meaningful only within one or the other of the two worlds. In any case, each of these conditions is either implied or contained within the various concrete expressions of systematic theology and yields completely different referents to the term "system."

These parts which condition the meaning of system are able to do so in that they are independent and necessary. They are independent inasmuch as they are usually doctrines which, if removed from the system, could be considered "wholes" or "sub-systems" in themselves. However, these parts are also necessary in that, without them, the remaining parts cannot be articulated in any way to achieve the expected whole. Or as Kant explained it, these parts provide the "conditions that determine *a priori* for every part its position and relation to the other parts."[5]

For instance, the doctrine of the *circulatio* in the *ST* is independent and could stand alone as a whole in itself as it had for centuries in Neoplatonic philosophy. But it is also necessary in that the other doctrines of Aquinas's system are conditioned by it, both in terms of structure and process. It conditions the structure insofar as Aquinas's concept of the *analogia entis* contained within provides the basis for the possibility of a corpus of salvific knowledge, which is the form of the whole expected. It conditions the process insofar as the anticipation of the beatific vision expresses the end of the whole expected.

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[5] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 361.

Alternately, in Barth's *CD*, his doctrine of election is independent for it could likewise stand alone as it already had in Neo-Platonism, Augustine, and Calvinism. But, this doctrine is necessary for it presupposes the sharp dichotomy of human and divine realities, which conditions the structure the whole expected in the *CD* by limiting it to the *loci communis* form and excluding the systematic. In addition to this dichotomy, however, Barth's doctrine of election also includes his doctrine of the double-election of Christ–the inside/outside element, which conditions the process of his system by opening up the possibility of its end—"proclamation," in which God speaks and the Church listens. And, interestingly, though Barth himself points out the conflict between Aquinas's *analogiae entis* and his own axiom of discontinuity, these two doctrines function in the exact same way in the two systems.

Thus, theological systems are conditioned by at least one of their parts whose role is both independent and necessary, providing the basis for both the whole to be expected and the articulation of the parts. Conversely, without at least one part, which is independent and necessary, there is no system but merely a collection or list of doctrines in an aggregate. In other words, without at least one doctrine that isn't dependent on the others, there is no unity.

The *a priori* Conditions to Theological Systems

The conditioning aspect of systems is due to the ambiguous nature of the concept of 'wholes' and its corollary that the difference between something 'articulated' and 'heaped' is dependent on what 'whole' is expected from the process of 'articulating' or 'heaping.' That is, a 'heap' is an aggregate of stuff that does not fulfill the expected whole, in the same way that a pile of bricks is not a house. On the other hand, the same

239

pile of bricks can be articulated to fit on a pallet and placed close at hand for the builders and as such it is no longer a 'heap' or aggregate. For when the *a priori* expectation (blueprint) of a house to be constructed requiring x number of bricks is applied to the pile, they are now meaningful as parts of a system. Thus, the parts that condition systems, in addition to being independent and necessary, are also logically *a priori* as an expectation of the whole, which is the end product of the system.

In other words, referring again to the house metaphor, the finished house is not the basis for the selection of materials and their articulation. Rather, it is an *a priori* idea of a not-yet-existent expectation of said future house that determines the acquisition of materials and guides the actual construction of this particular dwelling. Of course, this is reminiscent of the Aristotelian doctrine of the formal cause, but it can also be understood in the passive sense of discovering an already existing system from the perspective of the observer in distinction from that of the builder, that is, someone looking for a house will recognize one when they see it. As such, this is related to the aspect of knowledge described by the role of subjective ideas or categories that inform the meaning of the things observed objectively—'You find what you are looking for.' Either way, these parts that condition their systems are *a priori* in that the meaning of all the other parts of the same system is either originated or changed subsequent to the introduction of the *a priori*, conditioning principle(s).

Correspondingly, these parts are axiomatic in that their place in the system cannot be determined by any other parts of the same system. If this conditioning part comes into question, whether in terms of validity, appropriateness, truthfulness, or some other criteria, the whole system is implicated. Thus, to preserve the integrity of the whole and

the articulation of the parts, this particular part must be understood as an axiom, a given or a postulate whether or not the author or report of said system is explicit in this. Once this is understood, each system can be critiqued, analyzed, or compared on its own terms without violating its premise which, if questioned, renders the whole meaningless.

The Transcendental Meaning of System

Consequently, the conditioning principle of each system can be understood as both integral to that particular system and at the same time transcending it as a link to an external context to which it belongs as well.[6] But as the axiom or postulate of the local system, its transcendent meaning is not in question at that level and thus accepted as a given. What is interesting, however, is the implication if its origin which often remains a mystery. The problem is that, if this principle were to be analyzed in its external context, even if that context somehow establishes the validity of this principle, that explanation would be a system which would likewise be conditioned by some other *a priori* postulate which implies an even further transcendence. This is similar to Plato's "third-man" argument, which he introduced as criticism of his own theory of knowledge, by which it was shown that the same process that abstracted the ideal "form" of "man" from concrete examples could then be combined with them and an even further abstraction could be possible *ad infinitum*.[7]

Instead of allowing the regress to distract us, however, this should merely highlight the transcendental meaning of systems in that any given system implies a

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[6] Here, it should be noted that the use of the word "transcendental" in this section is to be understood in its most simple aspect of something that is in the immediate context, but at the same time from or connected to some context beyond the immediate.

[7] Plato *Parmenides*.

greater context. Put another way, every system can be best understood as a sub-system or part of a larger system. And though it is tempting to discuss the possibility of some meta-system in which there is no transcendental principle leading us to a further context, that system would have to be an object of absolute knowledge of the author or observer. But it has already been shown that God is the only candidate for that perspective and as such it would be outside of human analysis, unless it was God doing the knowing through some human's perspective, the fact of which can only be a given leading us back again to a transcendental, unverifiable postulate. Therefore, the most that can be said here is that each system points to a larger context through its transcendental principle.[8]

What this means for systematic theology is that any given system can be critiqued only to the extent of which it fulfills the expectation of the whole implied within its transcendental principle. If one disagrees with the transcendental principle, the system developed therewith is not subject to their criticism in that the system does not prove or disprove this principle, it only fulfills it. Therefore, when this type of disagreement is the case, the criticism must address whatever external explanatory system provides the basis for the principle in question. But, this criticism is only going to be meaningful within a context where all participants can find a common postulate, that is, transcendental principle. And interestingly, this return to logic reminds us of the origin of this term in theology and philosophy in Keckermann's system of logic. Therefore, whether or not

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[8] Another corollary that is beyond the scope of this study is the possible connection between this aspect of cognitive systems and Gödel's incompleteness theorems in which he argues that "any effectively generated theory capable of expressing elementary arithmetic cannot be both consistent and complete. In particular, for any consistent, effectively generated formal theory that proves certain basic arithmetic truths, there is an arithmetical statement that is true, but not provable in the theory" (Ernest

one agrees with Barth's own "basic view of things," every system presupposes some "basic view of things" to the extent that it requires a postulated, non-contested, transcendental principle.

Revised Definition and Reservations

Thus, any discussion of the meaning and function of the term "system" in theology must account for this transcendental principle. And, as such, a modified definition based on the foregoing conclusions can be suggested. A system of theology is: "any structure of theological doctrines or principles articulated in a way that results in the fulfillment of the whole anticipated by its transcendental principle."

Of course at this point the question arises (if not much earlier in this study): Does this tell us anything about systems at all? Could it be that a system is merely anything that inspires the expectation of some whole? And ultimately this is all I am willing to say about systems. That is, that the idea of system and its related concepts and terminology are really all just our attempt to express the mysterious conviction that some things seem to be more than just piles or heaps but rather evoke the idea of a "whole," the definition of which is equally mysterious being that it is somehow "greater than the sum of its parts."

Recommendations

The above reservations should not, however, have to threaten the validity of systematic theology or even take this discipline 'back to the drawing board' as it were. Rather, if nothing else, this should improve the quality and relevance of the contributions

Nagel, James Roy Newman, and Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Gödel's Proof* [New York: New

of systematic theology as a discipline. What makes theology 'systematic' should be more than just the attribute of orderliness or coherence, which can be accomplished while still being little more than a list or a pile of doctrines. Rather, based on this humbling self-critique of our discipline, systematic theology should have more to say about the unity of knowledge in general if not even the unity of being. Not that these realizations are new to theology or philosophy, but that they should play a more prominent role in our evaluation of specific systems as such.

In other words, instead of evaluating a particular system of theology as though it were somehow discrete and independent of other thought, these should always be understood in the greater context of all knowledge and being through time. Can anything called a "system of theology" stop short of saying something meaningful about divinity or metaphysics? Therefore, with the above conclusions about theological systems in mind, systematic theology, as a discipline, should be more cognizant and intentional about the transcendental nature of its structures and processes. Hence, as such it can reclaim its place as a confident voice concerning God, Being, reality, time, and other metaphysical questions that the other disciplines are so reluctant to address.

Related to this, systematic theology should have more to say about the 'foundations' that often lie in the sub-text of particular systems. For, regardless of how articulately one is able to critique the conclusions or particular doctrines in a theological system, if the critic and author are not viewing the system from the same axiomatic perspective, the critique is worthless. This type of criticism shows only how the parts of

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York University Press, 2001], 1ff.).

said system would not fit into a structure built by the critic on a completely different foundation.

Thus, any evaluation of a particular system can focus on one of two productive approaches. Said system can either be evaluated on how well it fulfills the expectation of the whole provided by its own transcendental principles or those principles can be evaluated in terms of their greater context and the expectation of the greater whole, which they help fulfill. And, consequently, systematic theology can be the discipline that guides us back, over and again, to the ever-expanding realization that the picture is bigger than we initially thought.

APPENDIX

PUBLICATIONS WITH THE TERM "SYSTEM"
IN THEIR TITLES SINCE 1550
(arranged by date of publication)

Éguinaire Baron. *Dedigesta seu Pandectas mannatium libri system, partim nunc priemmni lucem editi, partim ab autore recogniti et emendati*. Lutet. 1556.

Keckermann, Bartholomew. *Systema logicae, tribus libris adornatum, pleniore praeceptorum methodo, et commentariis scriptis ad praeceptorum illustrationem*. Hanoviae: Antonius 1600.

_____. *Systema grammaticae Hebraeae, sive, sanctae linguae exactior methodus*. Hanoviae: Antonius, ca. 1600.

_____. *Systema S. S. Theologiæ, Tribvs Libris adornatum. Methodum ac Dispositione[m] operis Tabvla præfixa adumbrat. Cum indice rerum & verborum locupletissimo*. Hanoviæ: Apud Guilielmum Antonium 1602.

Casmann, Ott. *Doctrinæ et vitæ politicæ methodicum ac breve sistema. Ex variorvum Theologorvm, ivreconsultorum, [et] Philosophorum, cum primis vero recentium scriptis, Excerptum [et] adornatum ab Othone Casmanno. Cui adjectæ sunt Appendiculæ Aphoristicæ, Ethicæ, [et] Politicæ, Item princeps Plinianus. Agapetianus*. Francfurt: E Collegio Musarum Paltheniano 1603.

Timpler, Clemens. *Metaphysicae Systema methodicum, libris 5. In quo non tantum praecepta de rebus ad hanc disciplinam pertinentibus breviter et perspicue traduntur, sed etiam*. Steinfurt: Caesar 1604.

Sattler, Wolfgang. *Dianoia astrologica Accessit tandem & suecinta Exegesis astrologica, definitionum & diuisionum astrologicarum verum sistema*. Montisbelgardi: Iacobi Foillet, 1605.

Timpler, Clemens. *Physicae seu philosophiae naturalis Systema methodicum*. Hanoviae: Antonius, 1605.

Keckermann, Bartholomew. *Systema logicae minus succincto praeceptorum compendio tribus libris adornatum ut sevire possio gymnasio Dantisco*. Hanoviae, 1606.

_____. *Systema Ethicæ. Tribus libris adornatum [et] publicis prælectionibus traditum in Gymnasio Dantiscano*. London: Ex Officina Nortoniana, 1607.

_____. *Systema disciplinae politicae, publicis praelectionibus anno 1606 propositum in gymnasio Dantiscano, a. Seorsim accessit Synopsis disciplinae oeconomicae, eodem auctaure*. Hanoviae, 1607.

Naevius, Sebastian. *Systematis selectorum ius Iustinianeum et feudale concernentium volumen alterum continens quatuor illius partes posteriors*. Francfurt: Sauer, Johann Fischer, Peter Erben 1608.

Keckermann, Bartholomew. *Systema rhetorica, in quo artis praecepta plene et methodica traduntur a 1606 privatim propositum in Gymnasio Dantiocano*. Hanoviae, 1608.

Timpler, Clemens. *Philosophicae Practicae Systema Methodicum. In Tres Partes Digestum*. Hanouiae: Apud Guilielmum Antonium MDCVIII, 1608-1612.

Keckermann, Bartholomaeus. *Scientiae metaphysicae compensiosum systema - in duas partes tributum a B. Keckermanno*. Hanoviae, 1609.

Alsted, Johann Henrich. *Artium liberalium ac facultatem omnium Systema Mnemoricum de modo discendi*. Francfort, 1609.

Helvicus, Christophorus. *Theatrum historicum sive Chronologiae systema novum*. Gissae Hessorum: Hampelius, 1609.

Alsted, Johann Heinrich. *Systema Mnemonicum Duplex. I. Minus, Succincto praeceptorum ordine Quatuor libris adornatum. II. Maius, pleniore praeceptorum Methodo, et Commentariis scriptis ad praeceptorum illustrationem adornatum Septem libris. In Quibus artis memorativae praecepta plene et methodice traduntur*. Francfurt: Palthenius, 1610.

_____. *Theatrum Scholasticum. In Qvo Consiliarius Philosophicus proponit et exponit I. Systema & Gymnasium Mnemonicum, de perfectione Memoriæ & Reminiscentiæ. II. Gymnasium Logicum, de perfectione Judicii, ubi disserit de ratione III. Systema & Gymnasium oratorium, de perfectione linguæ, & Methodo Eloquentiæ*. Herbornæ Nassoviorum: Christoph Rab 1610.

Keckermann, Bartholomew. *Systema Physicum, Septem Libris Adornatum*. Hanoviae, 1610.

Themata decem contra systema logicum Keckermannianum Sub moderamine Jacobi Martini ventilanda exhibet Johannes Donnerus. Wittenberg, 1610.

Keckermann, Bartholomew. *Systema astronomiae compendiosum. In gymnasio dantiscano olim praelectum et 2 libris adornatum, quorum prior de motu stellarum, tum communi tum proprio: posterior de temporis distinctione a motu isto pendente ea docet, quae aliis ad frugalem Astronomiae usum sufficere, aliis ad legenda pleniora artificium in hoc genere scripta viam sternere possint*. Hanoviae: Antonius 1611.

_____. *Systema geographicum. Duobus libris adornatum & publice olim praelectum.* Hanoviae: Antonius 1611.

Timpler, Clemens. *Logicae systema methodicum libris V comprehensum. In quo universus bene disserendi et sciendi modus per praecepta et quaestiones explicatur.* Hanoviae: Antonius 1612.

Alsted, Johann Heinrich. *systema physicae harmonicae. Quatuor libellis methodice propositum.* Herbornae Nassoviorum, 1612.

Keckermann, Bartholomew. *Systema systematum Bartholomaei Keckermanni, omnia huius autoris scripta philosophica uno volumine comprehensa Lectori exhibens.* Hanoviae: Antonius, 1613.

Timpler, Clemens. *Rhetoricae systema methodicum, libris V comprehensum, in quo modus benedicendi . . . per praecepta et quaestiones . . . declaratur.* Hanoviae: antonii 1613.

Nolle, Heinrich. *Systema medicinae hermeticae generale.* Francfurt: Palthenius 1613.

_____. *Methodus metaphysici systematis conuenientissima. Canonibus illustrata et sex libris comprehensa.* Francfurt: Palthenius 1613.

Alsted, Johann Heinrich. *Logicae systema harmonicum. In quo universus bene disserendi modus ex authoribus Peripateticis juxtà et Raméis traditur. Per Praecepta Brevia, Canones Selectos, et Commentaria Dilucida. Quibus non solùm scientia nobilissimae artis, sed etiam usus, et is quidem inprimis continetur.* Herbornae Nassoviorum, 1614.

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259

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263

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282

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