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Response to Johan Eddebo - A Theistic Cosmological Theory Aligned with Principles of Thomism: The Holy Infinite Memory Model of Consciousness.

The HIM model regards consciousness as the central eternal characteristic of God the father, which simultaneously exists univocally throughout creation also, as the pure substance that directly bridges these two foundational aspects of reality. Of course, in doing this, it completely reconsiders the nature of consciousness, especially in regards to how it presents itself in creation. As noted in the first response, the way in which consciousness is initially described in the HIM model is reasonably consistent with Christian fundamental theology, however, this explanation becomes controversial when suggesting that its nature does not change within contingent being also, implying that the very consciousness we humans, and other creatures, embody has it grounding in the divine. For this to be the case, I indeed make it clear in this paper that, therefore, all actualised effects of creation must be constructed of, and thus contain at their centre, God's Holy Spirit of immutable self-consciousness.

To conceptualise God's identity at the basis of all created things, which is to emphasise the univocal presence of His essence (divine pure consciousness), is not unlike the perspectives of Francis', Scotus' or Bonaventure's accounts of univocity;

> So-called 'nature mysticism' was a worthy entranceway for Francis, and then Bonaventure laid the theological foundation for the same by seeing all things as *likenesses* of God, fingerprints and footprints (*vestigia Dei*) that reveal the divine DNA underlying all living links in creation. John Duns Scotus would philosophically name this 'the univocity of all being.' In other words, we may speak of all beings with 'one consistent voice.' Dawn Nothwehr, a Franciscan sister, lovingly calls it 'cosmic mutuality.'[1]

This passage certainly resonates with the theme of univocalism in the HIM model. The HIM model simply tries to specify the 'univocity of being' God expresses as His essence of self-consciousness. The 'divine DNA' mentioned in

1 Nothwehr, D.M., *Franciscan Theology of the Environment: An Introductory Reader*. Franciscan Media (2003)

this passage, in the context of the HIM model, can be interpreted as the actualised immaterial information (memories) that already exists in the divine mind of the Holy Spirit that guides the formation of all created things, with the pure potentiality of prime matter. In this sense, we can conceive the univocal consciousness of the Holy Spirit at the centre of all created things.

This paper does not focus on how the unchanging nature of God's uncreated consciousness is maintained as it arises in biologically embodied creatures. On the one hand, it seems self-evident that the consciousness we humans possess compared to our creaturely counterparts, is very different and is again very different to the consciousness God possesses. However, I do believe that a deep analysis of the univocal nature of consciousness is essential in reframing our understanding of this mysterious immaterial substance that we all know intimately. Motivated by this belief and the possibility of consciousness to act as the point that connects the divine to the created, I have written other papers in two different journals that attempt to explain how the uncreated essence of consciousness remains unchanged between eternity and creation and, in turn, a novel account of the biological mechanics of 'embodied perception' is given that offers counter-Darwinist perspectives on how life is intelligently designed and evolves towards an ever-increasingly refined image of God.

However, emphasising the univocality of consciousness also implies that, for consciousness to act as the bridge between the uncreated and created, God, in the form of the Holy Spirit, must act as the substantial form that provides the fully actualised information necessary to give rise to such a varied creation. The Father, therefore, must inherently possess infinite informational composition within His simple singular infinite essence, together making up His perfect mind. This feature of the HIM model is where I clearly deviate from Thomistic principles. However, this set of infinite memories is composed 'of' and 'within' His immutable simple essence of self-consciousness, which is to imply that, given God's absolute perfection and infinite nature as pure simplicity, He will naturally also contain a level of complexity to the same infinite degree, as, like the respondent suggests, together are marks of His absolute perfection.

Therefore, although much of this paper pays homage to the deeply insightful principles of Thomism, I would describe this seemingly opposing principle as a concept that extends from the Thomistic basis of this paper. To emphasise, this infinitely complex yet perfectly ordered actualised set of differentiated memories can only exist within an omnipresent 'background' essence that is of perfect undivided simplicity, which implies that there is a subtle relationship of order between these two features of His identity in that His simplicity naturally gives way to His complexity (although not in an ontological sense of course). His complexity only makes sense because of His foundational infinitely simplistic nature and, therefore, His composition does not oppose His singular nature but rather complements it.

To clarify further, the infinite complexities of God's mind exist in eternity as a hierarchy of memories nested within God's memory of Himself (the dominant holy infinite memory). These memories are not 'effects' of the holy infinite memory, as, according to Thomism, potentiality and change have no existence in eternity, but instead present themselves as a naturally fully actualised orderly uncreated pattern of unique entangled pieces of information. For this to be the case, the HIM model implies that its immaterial structure must occur within God's simplistic essence as a great non-local holographic fractal, where each part (memory) contains the nature of the whole (God's self-consciousness). Fractal structures allow complexity to evolve in an orderly logical fashion from an initial set of simple parameters, where such complexity complement and unfold in accordance with the underlying simplicity of the structure rather than opposing it in a disorderly incoherent way. Thus, fractals demonstrate perfectly how complexity has a secondary order to simplicity in much the same way in which God's composition exists nested hierarchically within His primary characteristic of simplicity.

However, in the created realm, this differentiated series of memories exist as a continuous unfoldment of created effects that collapse into actualised being from the causal point of God knowing Himself. So, although these memories already exist immaterially in God's mind as an immovable unified structure of uncreated actualities, in creation, they unravel sequentially as material effects, based on their hierarchal position in eternity. This description of how reality operates is consistent with Aquinas' view of the relationship between cause and effect, as effects can be understood as pre-existent within and, thus, inseparable to their efficient cause[2]. Therefore, in the temporality of creation, new effects continuously emerge, nested within the created actualities of the past, as the continual refreshment of the always changing present moment. This explanation of the relationship between the divine and the contingent also gives grounds for why we observe fractal structures, on all scales, throughout nature and are collecting more and more scientific evidence that support the idea that the meta-structure of the material universe is non-local and holographic.

This model obviously makes some controversial and challenging claims but I believe the answer to the mysteries of consciousness exist within the truth of Christianity and, as a result of revealing these natural relationships of fundamental reality, science will be collectively perceived through a new refreshed lens, creating a new chapter in human scientific progress.

2 Soars, D. 'Creation in Aquinas: ex nihilo or ex deo?' *New Blackfriars* (2021) 102, 957.