



## *In Duobus Modis: Is Exemplar Causality Instrumental According to Aquinas?*

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### Abstract

In speaking of the divine ideas or God's creative act in general, Aquinas's favorite analogy is that of the artist. Hence, understanding the finite artisan, especially in the way his idea functions as an exemplar, is key to understanding the *mentem Thomae* on a whole host of issues most especially exemplar causality. This paper asks a question seeking specificity on the causality of the artist's idea and thereby exemplar causality in general. Is an exemplar cause in its primary instance (the idea) an instrument? Does an exemplar idea always cause in an instrumental mode? This paper, after delineating exemplar and instrumental causality separately, argues the affirmative. All ideas which function as exemplars also necessarily function as instruments, the objections of mediation, temporality, the relation of intellect/will, and efficient causality notwithstanding. In concluding the paper identifies three possible implications for this finding including a slight qualification of Aquinas's mature rejection of instrumental creation.

### Keywords

Aquinas, exemplar, instrumental, idea, causality

In speaking of the divine ideas or God's creative act in general, Aquinas's favorite image is that of the artist. "God, since he acts with knowledge and volition, causes all things through his intellect and will just as (*sicut*) an artisan of his art."<sup>1</sup> Hence, understanding the finite artisan, especially in the way his idea functions as an

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, (*Textum Leoninum Romae 1888 editum*), ST I q.45, a. 6, co.: "*Ut enim supra ostensum est, cum de Dei scientia et voluntate ageretur, Deus est causa rerum per suum intellectum et voluntatem, sicut artifex rerum artificiarum. Artifex autem per verbum in intellectu conceptum, et per amorem suae voluntatis ad aliquid relatum, operatur.*" English translations, unless noted, are taken from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five Volumes*, trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1981).

exemplar, is key to understanding the *mentem Thomae* on a host of issues. Nevertheless, the intricacies of exemplar causality by the finite artisan's idea have not been adequately treated in the secondary literature.<sup>2</sup> Put more directly, nobody asks the question of the mode of exemplar causality.

### The Question

Attending to St. Thomas's two ways of dividing causes will help to delineate this question more precisely. The first way St. Thomas divides causes is by species. Thus the causes are efficient, material, formal, and final. Yet, another way to divide the causes is by mode, which is "[the] different relationships between causes and things caused."<sup>3</sup> Thus, an exemplar cause is formal by species and external by mode. Yet can one be more precise about the mode? Is it possible that exemplarity must also function in another mode? In other words, just as the external mode is central to exemplarity could another mode be essential? One primary candidate for this other mode is instrumentality.<sup>4</sup> In this light the question is more precise: Is exemplarity formal in species but both external and instrumental in mode? Can it function in both these modes simultaneously?

Another way to introduce the question is by the two-fold aspect of an idea: a principle of cognition and production. As a principle of cognition, it belongs to an idea to inform the mind. Francis Meehan claims that, as a principle of production the idea is an "operative form" and "assimilated to the efficient cause."<sup>5</sup> Does the inability of an idea to cause qua exemplar apart from the will<sup>6</sup> mean that exemplarity is always instrumental? In other words, is exemplar causality, because of its dependence on efficient causality, thereby instrumental?

<sup>2</sup> In treating the image none of the following scholars mention instrumental causality: Theodore Kondoleon, *Exemplary Causality in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Ph.D. diss. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967); Vivian Boland, *Ideas in God according to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1996); Gregory Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008); Fr. Marie-Charles Perret, "La notion d'exemplarité." *Revue Thomiste* 41 (1936), pp. 446–69; Francis Meehan, "Efficient Causality in Aristotle and St. Thomas." PhD diss., (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1940), p. 180–81.

<sup>3</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae (Textum Taurini 1950 editum)*, Com. Meta. V l.3, n. 783. These are only accidental differences and thus do not divide the causes essentially.

<sup>4</sup> Herman Reith, *The Metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1962), p. 156–58.

<sup>5</sup> Meehan, p. 181.

<sup>6</sup> Perret, 461: "Séparer la cause efficiente de la cause exemplaire, c'est donc pratiquer un morcelage aussi pénible que celui d'un artiste produisant une oeuvre d'art sans idéal, d'un idéal aboutissant à une oeuvre d'art sans artiste."

The thesis of this paper will be an affirmative answer. In order to prove this thesis, the paper will consist of four sections: instrumental causality, exemplar causality, the argument against, and the argument for.

## The Principal/Instrumental Relationship

Before answering our central question it is imperative to clearly define and describe the principal/instrumental relationship. Aquinas speaks of instrumental causality many times throughout his corpus, both explicitly<sup>7</sup> and implicitly.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, it is so central that it is the paradigm by which he interprets all finite causality in relation to divine causality.<sup>9</sup> Put simply, an instrument is “that which moves<sup>10</sup> [something else] through being itself moved.”<sup>11</sup> This definition holds true throughout Aquinas’s life.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, if one wants to understand instrumental causality more precisely, one must attend to the

<sup>7</sup> Aquinas’s *ex officio* treatments (according to Meehan) are: “IV sent. 1.1.4; de verit. 27.4; de pot 5.1.6 and 5.6.4; SCG III 66; ST I-II q. 62, a. 1.”

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Aquinas conceives of the relation of all finite agents to God in terms of instrumentality. Cf. SCG III c. 70.

<sup>9</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Potentia (Textum Taurini 1953 editum)*, De Pot. q.3, a. 7: “*Sic ergo Deus est cause omnis actionis, prout quodlibet agens est instrumentum divinae virtutis operantis.*” Cf. also, SCG II, 21: “*Omnis... alia substantia praeter Dum est causata in quantum habet esse causatum ab alio. Impossibile est igitur quot sit causa essendi nisi sicut instrumentalis et agens in virtute alterius.*”

<sup>10</sup> It seems that Aquinas here means motion in an improper sense (change) and not locomotion (especially if one is to make sense of his using instrumentality to express all finite causality in relation to God. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles (Textum Leoninum, 1961 editum)*, SCG III c. 70). Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Physics of Aristotle* (Notre Dame: Dumb Ox Press, 1999), III, l. 2, nn. 285–86. Cf. also John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), p. 445–46. Motion is properly said only of changes in quality (alteration), place (locomotion), and quantity (increase/decrease). Motion can improperly be said of changes in substance (generation/corruption) and even more broadly of any transition from potency to act whatsoever (the action of something in potency insofar as it is in potency, i.e. change).

<sup>11</sup> De Pot. q. 5, a. 5, co.

<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, there is certainly development beyond this simple identification. The difference may be seen when comparing St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate (Textum Leoninum 1972 editum)*, q. 27, a. 4, ad 3 (DV), SCG II c. 89 & SCG III c. 70. Put simply it is the difficulty of reconciling SCG II c. 89: “This accounts for our observation of the fact that an effect produced by a principal agent through an instrument is more properly attributed to the principal agent than to the instrument. In some instances, however, the action of the principal agent attains to something in the effect produced, to which the action of the instrument does not attain” with SCG III c. 70: “rather, it is wholly done by both, according to a different way, just as the same effect is wholly attributed to the instrument and also wholly to the principal agent.” For some aspects of this development see Bernhard Blankenhorn, O.P., “The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet,” in *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2006), pp. 255–94.

different distinctions and precisions Aquinas makes. It is the purpose of this section to outline and explore those distinctions.

### The Proper and Improper Senses of Instrument

Before getting into the divisions of instruments, one must distinguish between the proper and improper senses of the term instrument.<sup>13</sup>

An instrument is spoken of in two ways: (1) Properly—when something is so moved by another that there is not conferred upon it by the mover any principle of such a motion, as a saw is moved by the carpenter. Such an instrument is wholly without freedom. (2) More commonly whatever moves something and is moved by another is called an instrument, whether there is in it the principle of its own motion or not. In this sense it is not necessary for the notion of freedom to be wholly excluded from that of an instrument, because something can be moved by another and still move itself. This is the case with the human mind.<sup>14</sup>

As one can see, the proper sense of instrument excludes self-motion. Thus one may say that only inanimate instruments (separate or conjoined) are properly said to be instruments; they are not free (have no internal principle of motion).<sup>15</sup> This does not mean that

<sup>13</sup> Aquinas only mentions this division in his early DV. It does not seem he would have to abandon it in his later development on the causality of an instrument. Hence, one may consider it as at least compatible with his mature thought wherein he utilizes the term instrument for both free and determined agents.

<sup>14</sup> DV q. 24, a. 1, ad 5: “*Ad quantum dicendum, quod instrumentum dupliciter dicitur. Uno modo proprie; quando scilicet aliquid ita ab altero movetur quod non confertur ei a movente aliquod principium talis motus; sicut serra movetur a carpentario: et tale instrumentum est expers libertatis. Alio modo dicitur instrumentum magis communiter quidquid est movens ab alio motum, sive sit in ipso principium sui motus, sive non. Et sic ab instrumento non oportet quod omnino excludatur ratio libertatis; quia aliquid potest esse ab alio motum, quod tamen seipsum movet: et ita est de mente humana.*” Cf. Also ST I q. 36, a. 3, ad 2 & SCG II c. 21: “But it is only in order to cause something by way of motion that an instrument is ever employed; for to be a moved mover is the very essence of an instrument.” It would seem that Burrell’s distinction between instrument and secondary cause breaks down with this citation and SCG III c. 70. What Burrell wants to identify as a secondary cause is really an instrument in the broad sense. Likewise, what Burrell identifies as strictly secondary causality is identified by Aquinas as instrumentality in SCG III c. 70. Cf. David Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 97. Nevertheless, this does not mean there is no difference between the third and fourth ways God works in nature. cf. Meehan, 298–99.

<sup>15</sup> DV q. 27, a. 4, co: “*Haec enim est ratio instrumenti, in quantum est instrumentum, ut moveat motum; unde, sicut se habet forma completa ad per se agentem, ita se habet motus quo movetur a principali agente, ad instrumentum, sicut serra operatur ad scamnum. Quamvis enim serra habeat aliquam actionem quae sibi competit secundum propriam formam, ut dividere, tamen aliquem effectum habet qui sibi non competit nisi in quantum est mota ab artifice, scilicet facere rectam incisionem, et convenientem formae artis. Et sic*

instruments, speaking properly, do not cause under their own formality. The saw still cuts. Nevertheless, it does affirm that their causality is *only* exercised when motion is added from without; there is no internal source of motion. All animate instruments, on the other hand, are moved movers such that motion from without and motion from within are expressed.

### The Two-fold Causality of an Instrument

The two-fold causal nature of an instrument is Aquinas's most basic and frequent division of instrumental causality. It is a division from the perspective of instrumental activity. "An instrument has a twofold action; one is instrumental, in respect of which it works not by its own power but by the power of the principal agent. The other is its proper action, which belongs to it in respect of its proper form."<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the first notion of an instrumental cause is that it acts from its own power, causes by its own form.<sup>17</sup> In the metaphysical thought of St. Thomas, each creature is truly a recipient of an *actus essendi* which is not the divine act but a participation therein,<sup>18</sup> the essence exercising a passive limitation of that act.<sup>19</sup> This intrinsic act of being

*instrumentum habet duas operationes: unam quae competit ei secundum formam propriam; aliam quae competit ei secundum quod est motum a per se agente, quae transcendit virtutem propriae formae.*"

<sup>16</sup> ST III q. 62, a. 1, ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod instrumentum habet duas actiones, unam instrumentalem, secundum quam operatur non in virtute propria, sed in virtute principalis agentis; aliam autem habet actionem propriam, quae competit sibi secundum propriam formam; sicut securi competit scindere ratione suae acuitatis, facere autem lectum in quantum est instrumentum artis. Non autem perficit actionem instrumentalem nisi exercendo actionem propriam; scindendo enim facit lectum. Et similiter sacramenta corporalia per propriam operationem quam exercent circa corpus, quod tangunt, efficiunt operationem instrumentalem ex virtute divina circa animam, sicut aqua Baptismi, ablundo corpus secundum propriam virtutem, abluit animam in quantum est instrumentum virtutis divinae; nam ex anima et corpore unum fit. Et hoc est quod Augustinus dicit, quod corpus tangit et cor abluit."

<sup>17</sup> De Pot., q.3 a. 4: "in the sense that the second cause could have a twofold action, one proceeding from its own nature, and the other from the power of a preexisting cause." Nevertheless, in order to understand an instrument's nature one must know the end to which it is ordained. Cf. DV q. 2, a. 5, s.c. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Mary T. Clark, *An Aquinas Reader* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 78. Cf. de an., a. 6 and ad. 2. "The act of existing (*actus essendi*) is the highest act in which all things can participate, but the act of existing itself does not participate in anything at all. And so if there is a being that is itself a subsisting act of existing (*impsum esse subsistens*), as we call God, we say that it does not participate in anything. But this is not the case with other subsisting forms, which necessarily participate in the act of existing itself and are related to it as potentiality to act."

<sup>19</sup> Wippel, pp. 132–76. Put simply, the creature is not identical with its existence but merely *has* existence. Thus, the essence exercises causality when it is co-created as "relative non-being" which limits the *esse* received to a certain mode of *esse*.

allows the creature to be a true author of its own actions.<sup>20</sup> Thus, an instrument causes the effect by its own proper and intrinsic power.

The second aspect of an instrumental cause is that it is raised above its level and participates in the power of the principal agent.<sup>21</sup> Thus conceived the instrument causes something that would not be possible under its own power: “for it belongs to an axe to make a couch insofar as it is in the instrument of an art.”<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, at least in Aquinas’s mature thought, part of the effect is not attributed to each agent, but the *whole effect* is attributed to both according to their respective causalities.<sup>23</sup> Thus, it belongs to the artisan to make the couch intellectually *by* his art; it belongs to the axe to make the couch *by* cutting. “Both [operate] immediately with regard to the effect, though not independently from one another, but according to a certain order in which the first has priority over the other.”<sup>24</sup> This synergy is non-competitive, for the primary agent enables and actualizes both the act of the instrument as well as operating more immediately upon the effect.<sup>25</sup> As Mark Jordan puts it, “Any instrument thus has two actions, that of its own form and that of its moving cause. These two are connected: the moving cause achieves its effect through the proper action of the instrument.”<sup>26</sup>

### The Types of Instruments

Beyond the two-fold causality of an instrument, Aquinas also distinguishes types of instruments: animate/inanimate and separate/conjoined.<sup>27</sup> These divisions split the category of instrument in itself and in relation. The first division, animate/inanimate, divides instruments in themselves. The second division, separate/conjoined, divides instruments in their relation to the principle agent. The latter division is not one of spatial union and separation but ontological union and diversity. United instruments are ontologically united to the principle agent whereas separate instruments are not.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Warren Carroll, *Creation in St. Thomas* (Toronto: PIMS, 1997); SCG II, c. 35, n. 4. “*Et ideo, sicut effectus naturalis agentis sequitur esse agentis . . .*”

<sup>21</sup> De Pot., q. 3, a. 4. SCG III, c. 78; IV, c. 74.

<sup>22</sup> ST III q. 62, a. 1, ad 2.

<sup>23</sup> SCG III c. 70.

<sup>24</sup> Rudi te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality* (New York: Brill, 1995), p. 175.

<sup>25</sup> Mark D. Jordan, “Theology and Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, eds. Kretzmann and Stump (Cambridge: University Press, 1993), pp. 232–51.

<sup>26</sup> Jordan, “Theology and Philosophy.” Cf. also SCG III, c. 70.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Wawrykow, “Jesus in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas,” in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 42.1 (2012), pp. 13–33. Cf. page 27.

<sup>28</sup> United instruments can either be animate or inanimate. The only animate united instrument is the human nature of Christ. Certainly, according to Aquinas, Christ’s human

Based on these two divisions Aquinas holds that there are four types of instrumental causes: animate conjoined, animate separate, inanimate conjoined,<sup>29</sup> and inanimate separate. The first division, animate conjoined, is only inhabited by one instance: the humanity of Christ.<sup>30</sup> Animate separate instruments are those instruments which are animate but not ontologically united to the principal agent. All humans are instruments of this type in relation to God as are all emissaries for the king.<sup>31</sup> Inanimate conjoined instruments are those that are inanimate but conjoined ontologically to the principal agent. These would include the body or hand in relation to the soul.<sup>32</sup> The final category, inanimate separate instruments, are those that are not ontologically joined to the principal agent and are not animate.<sup>33</sup> This category is best exemplified by a pen or computer.

### Exemplar Causality

Exemplar causality will also have to be disambiguated prior to answering my main question. To do so in the context of this paper will necessarily be brief. Nevertheless, Aquinas's mature position on exemplar causality can be adequately outlined in the space proper. To do so sufficiently will require short summaries of Aquinas's position on the definition of exemplar causality, the types, and finally exemplarism's relation to the other causes.

As stated above, Aquinas always gives ideas a two-fold role. First, they are principles in the order of cognition. This activity is the

nature is ontologically united to his divine nature in the second person of the Trinity (without mixing). Inanimate united instruments are a harder category to identify. Indeed it seems that the body or the hands are animated precisely by the soul and would thus be animated conjoined instruments. Nevertheless, in themselves they are inanimate and only when used by the soul or the intention of the soul are they seen as instruments. Thus it seems right to identify them as inanimate conjoined instruments. They are inanimate in themselves (are not the principle of act).

<sup>29</sup> This is the only category that Wawrykow does not explicitly identify. Nevertheless, one could get such a category from Aquinas's texts such as SCG IV c. 41: "Now, the body and its parts are the organ of the soul in one fashion; external instruments in quite another. For this axe is not the soul's very own instrument, as this hand is, for by an axe many can operate, but this hand is deputy to this soul in its very own operation. For this reason the hand is an instrument of the soul united to it and its very own, but the axe is an instrument both- external and common."

<sup>30</sup> SCG IV c. 41.

<sup>31</sup> Super Sent., lib. 2 d. 18 q. 2 a. 3 ad 2: "*Alio autem modo sequitur aliquid ex eis sicut ex instrumentis, ut dicit philosophus in 2 de anima, quod ignis in motu augmenti est sicut instrumentum regulatum, sed principaliter agens et regulans est virtus animae dirigens in determinatam quantitatem.*"

<sup>32</sup> SCG III C. 126 N. 2: "Again, since bodily organs are the instruments of the soul, the end of each organ is its use, as is the case with any other instrument;" SCG IV c. 33.

<sup>33</sup> ST I-II q. 18, a. 1, ad 2.



*per se* effect of an idea.<sup>34</sup> In other words, it properly belongs to an idea to inform the mind. Thus conceived ideas are not exemplars, for nothing imitates them. Second, ideas are principles in the order of production.<sup>35</sup> It is in the order of production that ideas serve as exemplars in a second moment of causality. It is by exemplifying the effect that the idea causes the effect to be. Thus Aquinas defines an exemplar cause as “that in the likeness of which something is made.”<sup>36</sup>

In this regard Aquinas locates three senses of exemplar based on the three ways form can be said relative to the intrinsic form of the effect (*secundum quam*).<sup>37</sup> The first is a natural exemplar. This type of exemplarism occurs in natural agents exercising univocal causality. The agent’s form is the form *a qua* the effect is made. It is only an exemplar in an improper sense and not the type of exemplarity with which I am concerned. The second sense of exemplar is an external exemplar, as the artist looks at a landscape in order to paint it. Nevertheless, this sense of exemplar is also said improperly because the external exemplar only exercises its causality on the product of art by the intellectual exemplar. In other words, the external exemplar is reducible to the intellectual exemplar (*ad quam*). The intellectual exemplar is the proper sense of exemplar. Hence, exemplar causality properly speaking is the intellectual idea in light of which and after which something is made/made to imitate.<sup>38</sup>

How does an exemplar idea exercise causality? Aquinas conceives of exemplar causality working in tandem with the other causes to produce an effect. Remember in itself an idea only operates in the order of cognition. Nevertheless, an idea can also serve in the order of production. In this respect Aquinas locates a causality for an idea, one of which is to cause specifically as an exemplar cause. The first

<sup>34</sup> This is implied by Aquinas’s criticism of Plato for positing subsisting ideas apart from a mind. Cf. Doolan, pp. 192–195.

<sup>35</sup> ST I-II q. 15, a. 3, co.: “*Respondeo dicendum quod, cum ideae a Platone ponentur principia cognitionis rerum et generationis ipsarum, ad utrumque se habet idea, prout in mente divina ponitur. Et secundum quod est principium factionis rerum, exemplar dici potest, et ad practicam cognitionem pertinet. Secundum autem quod principium cognoscitivum est, proprie dicitur ratio; et potest etiam ad scientiam speculativam pertinere. Secundum ergo quod exemplar est, secundum hoc se habet ad omnia quae a Deo fiunt secundum aliquod tempus. Secundum vero quod principium cognoscitivum est, se habet ad omnia quae cognoscuntur a Deo, etiam si nullo tempore fiant; et ad omnia quae a Deo cognoscuntur secundum propriam rationem, et secundum quod cognoscuntur ab ipso per modum speculationis.*”

<sup>36</sup> DV q. 3, a. 1; ST I q. 35, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>37</sup> Doolan, 160–161.

<sup>38</sup> DV q. 3, a. 1, co; ST III q. 24, a. 3, ad 3: “the exemplified thing must conform to the exemplar according to the order of form.”



moment is in the intentional order.<sup>39</sup> In the intentional order the idea functions as a final cause. It is that which the agent intends to produce and therefore serves as a motivation. Yet an exemplar qua exemplar is not a final cause.<sup>40</sup> Rather, as a final cause the idea begins the production process for the finite agent by serving as that which is desired to be educed from matter.<sup>41</sup>

There is a second moment of causality in the productive order for an idea that is proper called exemplarity. In this sense it exercises a real causality, but one which is, in a way, passive.<sup>42</sup> This is when the idea serves as a formal cause of the will, because of its election to be made, and is assimilated to the efficient cause thereby measuring the effect to be produced. In other words, an idea is only productive in dependence on a will. Exemplar causality needs efficient causality in order to exercise its causality at all.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, exemplar causality cannot be reduced to efficient causality. In this second moment an exemplar causes by the mode of imitation.<sup>44</sup> In other words, the will, by making something to imitate the idea, both causes the idea to measure the effect and the effect to imitate the idea.

### Is an Exemplar Cause an Instrumental Cause?

After finishing the short survey of both exemplar causality and instrumental causality, I am now in a position to return to the central question: is an exemplar cause always instrumental? In other words, does exemplarity operate in both the external and instrumental modes necessarily? Certainly this is not a question Aquinas answers directly. Even more certainly, Aquinas never calls an idea instrumental. Due to these facts and no *verba Thomae* on the issue, any answer must

<sup>39</sup> ST I-II q. 9, a. 3, co. In this sense Kondoleon is right that the exemplar is a final cause. Cf. Kondoleon, pp. 158–60.

<sup>40</sup> Perrett, p. 462. Strictly speaking one may also divide between the *finis operis* and the *finis operantis*. A idea in the practical order is only a final cause as the *finis operis* not the *finis operantis*. Put simply, I intend to build a house *for the sake of inhabiting*. For the sake of inhabiting is the *finis operantis* whereas the house is the *finis operis*. The idea is the end of production not the end intended by the agent. Hence, strictly speaking the house is a means conceived in the act of counsel/deliberation and not the end intended by the will. It is only a final cause in an extended sense. Cf. DPD q. 3, a. 16, co.: “And although the form is the end of the operation, being the end that terminates the operation of the agent, nevertheless not every end is a form. For there is in the intention an end that is not the end of the operation, as in the case of a house. The form of the house is the end terminating the operation of the builder: but his intention does not terminate there but in a further end, namely a dwelling-place, so that the end of the operation is the form of a house, that of the intention, a dwelling-place.”

<sup>41</sup> DPD q. 6, a. 3, ad 16.

<sup>42</sup> Perrett, p. 461.

<sup>43</sup> DPD q. 6, a. 3, ad 3; VI meta. 1. 1, n 1153; ST I q. 14, a. 8.

<sup>44</sup> X meta. 1. 2, n. 1959; XII meta. 1. 7, n. 2535.

remain conjectural. In addition, any conjectural answer can be countered. Hence, this section will include both arguments against and for calling an exemplar cause an instrumental cause.

### The Case Against

The case against calling an idea instrumental is strong. In addition to lacking any explicit treatment of Aquinas, three difficulties seem to arise if one posits exemplars as instruments: the intellect and will seem to interact in a way Aquinas would not allow; instruments seem to function outside of the efficient order; and the notion of exemplarity itself would have to be changed.

The first argument against the idea being instrumental comes from the relation between the intellect and the will and the two-fold practical causality of an idea. Recall that the first moment of causality is exercised by the idea as a final cause. It is the will which is motivated by the idea as a final cause. By the same fact, it must be the will that uses the idea as an instrument, if it is to be an instrument. Nevertheless, the idea is not used by the will as an instrument but as a guide. The idea serves as a formal cause of the will's action,<sup>45</sup> not its instrument.<sup>46</sup> It would be better to say that the production of the house via execution is a *sine qua non* cause<sup>47</sup> or dispositive cause for an idea to exercise its exemplarity, but that the idea qua exemplar is not an instrument. Hence, exemplarity is not instrumental, at least not necessarily.

The second argument is based on SCG II c. 21 and efficient causality. There Aquinas says that "an instrument, moreover, is used because it is adapted to a certain effect, and can therefore mediate between the first cause and the effect, being in contact with both; the influence of the first cause thus reaches the effect through the instrument."<sup>48</sup> In other words, an instrument serves as a medium by which the influence of the primary agent reaches the effect. Nevertheless, ideas, which do not serve in the efficient order, cannot mediate between the artisan and the house. Put simply, instrumental causality is always of the species of efficient causality for Aquinas,<sup>49</sup> yet exemplars serve as external formal causes.

The third and final objection is based on the temporal nature of effects in relation to their principal and instrumental causes. Aquinas

<sup>45</sup> ST I-II q. 17, a. 1, co.

<sup>46</sup> ST I-II q. 9, a. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Reith, p. 156.

<sup>48</sup> SCG II c. 21, n. 6.

<sup>49</sup> ST I-II q. 62, a. 1, co.: "*Et ideo aliter dicendum, quod duplex est causa agens, principalis et instrumentalis.*"

holds that the effect of the instrument is temporally prior to the effect of the primary cause.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, an idea could be said, in a way, to mediate between an agent and a desired outcome in its first moment of causality, namely by attraction. However, exemplarity does not mediate between cause and effect qua exemplar but simply exemplifies the effect once it is produced. In other words, the causality of the agent must have brought about the effect before the idea can be said to exemplify. Since nothing uses the idea qua exemplar but only qua final cause an exemplar cannot be said to be an instrument. Put simply, since finite human agent's ideas are not causes of the being of their effect but only the form, the form must have come into existence apart from the mind before exemplarity happens.

### The Case For

The above three arguments, if true, would certainly preclude the possibility of seeing exemplar causality as always instrumental. Nevertheless, they do not seem to hold. The purpose of this section will be two-fold: to make a case for exemplar causality being instrumental causality based on two arguments and then answering the above objections. Once this exercise is complete it will be clear that an exemplar cause also functions in an instrumental mode.

The simplest and most convincing argument in favor of reading exemplar causality as instrumental is based on the correspondence between the two types of causality. Put simply, the way Aquinas describes exemplars causing is identical to the way instruments cause. Recall that instrumental causality means that the secondary cause is moved by the primary, causes by its own proper form, and thereby causes something higher or beyond its own proper form by the motion of the primary. This structure corresponds perfectly to the two-fold causality of an idea. By its own proper form an idea simply enlightens the mind. It belongs to the intentional order only. Nevertheless, when moved by the will, an idea achieves a higher effect (causing a form outside the mind) by enlightening the mind.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> SCG II c. 21, n. 78: "Now, the effect answering to an instrument's proper action is prior, in the order of productive process, to the effect corresponding to the principal agent."

<sup>51</sup> While this argument is conjectural vis-à-vis explicit texts, one might take SCG III c. 69, n. 23 as evidence: "*Similiter etiam non oportet quod, quia omnis actio inferiorum corporum fit per qualitates activas et passivas, quae sunt accidentia, quod non producat ex actione eorum nisi accidens. Quia illae formae accidentales, sicut causantur a forma substantiali, quae simul cum materia est causa omnium propriorum accidentium, ita agunt virtute formae substantialis. Quod autem agit in virtute alterius, producit effectum similem non sibi tantum, sed magis ei in cuius virtute agit: sicut ex actione instrumenti fit in artificiato similitudo formae artis. Ex quo sequitur quod ex actione formarum*

Furthermore, based on Aquinas's twelve steps of the human action,<sup>52</sup> the intellect is moved by the will in the order of production. Thus, in the order of object, the intellect (with the idea of a house) serves as that which the will wills and sets as an end for all the other acts. Nevertheless,

in this respect [after willing the end proposed by the intellect], the will moves the other powers of the soul to their acts, for we make use of the other powers when we will. For the end and perfection of every other power, is included under the object of the will as some particular good: and always the art or power to which the universal end belongs, moves to their acts the arts or powers to which belong the particular ends included in the universal end.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, in the order of production of that end the idea does function as moved by the will. It is only because of this motion that it can be an exemplar.<sup>54</sup> Since to cause when moved belongs to the very essence of instrumentality all exemplarity is instrumental.<sup>55</sup>

*accidentalium producuntur formae substantiales, in quantum agunt instrumentaliter in virtute substantialium formarum.*" Likewise, with DPD q. 3, a. 7, ad 7.

<sup>52</sup> For St. Thomas's conception of the human act see Daniel Westburg, *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); John A. Oesterle, *Ethics: The Introduction to Moral Science* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1957); Michael Sherwin, O.P., *By Knowledge & By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005); Vernon J. Bourke, *Ethics: A Textbook in Moral Philosophy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951); John Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions: St. Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

<sup>53</sup> ST I-II q. 9, a. 1, co.

<sup>54</sup> The conjectural evidence for this argument is ST I-II q. 16, a. 1, co.: "The use of a thing implies the application of that thing to an operation: hence the operation to which we apply a thing is called its use; thus the use of a horse is to ride, and the use of a stick is to strike. Now we apply to an operation not only the interior principles of action, viz. the powers of the soul or the members of the body; as the intellect, to understand; and the eye, to see; but also external things, as a stick, to strike. But it is evident that we do not apply external things to an operation save through the interior principles which are either the powers of the soul, or the habits of those powers, or the organs which are parts of the body. Now it has been shown above that it is the will which moves the soul's powers to their acts, and this is to apply them to operation. Hence it is evident that first and principally use belongs to the will as first mover; to the reason, as directing; and to the other powers as executing the operation, which powers are compared to the will which applies them to act, as the instruments are compared to the principal agent. Now action is properly ascribed, not to the instrument, but to the principal agent, as building is ascribed to the builder, not to his tools. Hence it is evident that use is, properly speaking, an act of the will."

<sup>55</sup> It might seem at first that this argument cannot avoid committing two fallacies. First, the fallacy of an illicit conversion of an A proposition by claiming that because it is the very essence of an instrument to be moved that all moved things are instruments. Likewise, it seems that one cannot argue for this either. The following argument: all instruments are moved things, X is a moved thing, therefore X is an instrument is invalid (undistributed middle). Nevertheless, the argument is neither of the above. It is: all

All that remains for proving that exemplar causality is always instrumental is to answer the objections raised above. The first objection claimed that the will does not move the intellect in producing the house, but the intellect moves the will in serving as a formal cause. On the other hand, one might say, the will does move the intellect after the intellect has determined the object.<sup>56</sup> In other words, in the act of *usus* Aquinas holds that the will moves all the powers of the soul to the production, and this includes the intellect.<sup>57</sup> Put simply, the will moves the intellect in production thereby causing the idea to serve as a measure of the effect's form.<sup>58</sup>

The second objection is really two objections. First, it claims that all instrumentality is efficient and second that all instruments are mediums. Exemplars function in neither of these ways and so cannot be instruments. To respond to this objection is quite simple. First, it is clear that not all instruments have to be efficient. Finite agents are instruments of God not only in the efficient realm but also in other species of causality.<sup>59</sup> Secondly, Aquinas holds that an idea does serve as a medium between cause and effect.<sup>60</sup>

exemplars are that which cause when moved; all things that cause when moved are instruments; thus, all exemplars are instruments.

<sup>56</sup> ST I-II q. 9, a. 1, ad 3: "*Ad tertium dicendum quod voluntas movet intellectum quantum ad exercitium actus, quia et ipsum verum, quod est perfectio intellectus, continetur sub universali bono ut quoddam bonum particulare. Sed quantum ad determinationem actus, quae est ex parte obiecti, intellectus movet voluntatem, quia et ipsum bonum apprehenditur secundum quandam specialem rationem comprehensam sub universali ratione veri. Et sic patet quod non est idem movens et motum secundum idem.*"

<sup>57</sup> ST I-II q. 16, a. 1, co. & ad 3; DV q. 5, a. 10, co.: "and the characters of the good and of an end primarily pertain to the will, which uses everything we have as instruments toward achieving our end." Cf. Stephen Brock, "What is the Use of Usus in Aquinas' Psychology of Action?," in *Moral and Political Philosophies in the Middle Ages*, eds. B. Bazán, E. Andújar, L. Sbrocchi, vol. II (Ottawa: Legas, 1995), pp. 654–64.

<sup>58</sup> Brock, 660: "The ensuing act of use is his first actively undertaking the real performance of that kind of action, by setting the appropriate instruments to work."

<sup>59</sup> There seem to be two separate questions here: whether instruments must always be efficient and whether instruments must always be in the same species of causality as their primary agent. An affirmative answer to the first would posit an odd conception in which God used us as instruments only in the efficient order. ST I-II q. 62, a. 1, co. certainly identifies instruments as functioning in the efficient order, but even in that article (whose context is concerned with efficient production of grace) has germs of the opposite opinion. "*Hoc autem proprie dicitur instrumentum, per quod aliquis operatur.*" That through which another operates does not necessarily have to be efficient. Likewise, in this article the idea in the mind of the agent is located as the principle agent and the saw the instrumental. Certainly then categories can be crossed in instrumentality according to Aquinas.

<sup>60</sup> DV q. 4, a. 1, ad 4: "*Ad quartum dicendum, quod medium quod accipitur inter terminos motus, aliquando accipitur secundum aequidistantiam terminorum, aliquando autem non. Sed medium quod est inter agens et patiens, si sit quidem medium, ut instrumentum, quandoque est propinquius primo agenti, quandoque propinquius ultimo patienti; et quandoque se habet secundum aequidistantiam ad utrumque; sicut patet in agente cuius actio ad patiens pervenit pluribus instrumentis. Sed medium quod est forma qua agens agit, semper est propinquius agenti, quia est in ipso secundum veritatem rei, non autem in*

The final objection is based on a temporal reading of exemplarity. It holds that exemplarity was temporally, or at least naturally, posterior to the existence of the effect. In other words, an exemplar only functions *qua exemplar ex post facto*. Nevertheless, this is not the view of Aquinas. Indeed, Aquinas holds, in the case of finite agents, that exemplars are cause of the becoming of their effect.<sup>61</sup> It is the exemplar that causes the effect to be a certain nature and not any other. If something serves as a principle of an effect it must be prior naturally to that effect and hence not posterior naturally or temporally.

### Conclusion

In summary one might say the following: the exemplar in the mind of the finite agent is an inanimate separate instrument in the proper sense. The idea causes its effect by its proper activity of informing the mind and in dependence on the movement of the will functions instrumentally to cause the coming to be of its effect *qua exemplar*. Such seems to be the thrust of Aquinas's thought.

However, one might still be wondering, why ask this question in the first place. What fruits will this argument yield? It would seem that the major fruit comes in qualifying Aquinas's mature denial of instrumental creation. If, in fact, Aquinas admits that there is a logical distinction between God and his ideas, and his exemplar ideas serve as causes of *esse* in their effects then we could also locate an instrumental creation according to distinctions of reason. This merely logical instrumental creation also grounds all language of God creating *by* his ideas (instrumental language) and further specifies the analogical language between the finite artisan and the Divine artisan. None of these aspects arise unless one analyzes the intimate relation between instrumental and exemplar causality.

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*patiente nisi secundum sui similitudinem. Et hoc modo verbum dicitur esse medium inter patrem et creaturam. Unde non oportet quod aequaliter distet a patre et creatura."*

<sup>61</sup> Doolan, pp. 173–175. I owe a special thanks to Dr. Doolan for whose class this paper was written and whose comments on it were indispensable.