he was commissioned to investigate the supposedly crypto-Modernist tendencies of Le Saulchoir's approach to Aquinas, a task in which he was apparently guided by notes provided by Fr Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange (in Rome and without the appropriate papers to visit Occupied France). Philippe denounced Chenu at a faculty meeting, dismissed him as Regent of Studies and Rector of the Pontifical Faculties, installing himself. This is the same man as was convicted in 1956 of running L'Eau Vive, a community near Le Saulchoir, in which mentally disturbed women were subjected to a form of spiritual direction that included physical sexual abuse (Komonchak, page xlv) – a practice also justifiable, as he apparently believed, by his lunatic Mariology (alas, his crazy ideas influenced Jean Vanier, founder of l'Arche).

According to *Le Saulchoir on Trial* (p. 51) the Dominicans at Oxford were among the study houses that liked Chenu's approach. A version of Chenu's effort to hold together the subjective and objective dimensions of faith appeared in *Blackfriars* July 1938 [487–494]. Morover, the January 1938 issue [5–15] carries an English version of the lecture on 'the revolutionary intellectualism' of St Albert the Great which Chenu delivered at Oxford on 8th December 1937 (in French!).

Settled back in France in 1938 at Etiolles, Le Saulchoir survived Thomas Philippe. When I got there in 1962, the academic leadership had been in the hands of the Belgian theologian Jerome Hamer, obviously one of Yves Congar's disciples. In 1972, the Pontifical Faculties moved into Paris to St Jacques, with the fine library, and the sprawling buildings at Etiolles were vacated.

As Professor Fouilloux allows the wider context to this squabble over the role of historical consciousness in reading Aquinas includes a certain rivalry between Le Saulchoir/Paris and the Angelicum/Rome, exacerbated by Chenu's caustic mockery of major figure on the Thomist scene. With the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the Spanish civil war, and then World War II, it became increasingly difficult to keep Catholic theology clear of national and international politics. Absurdly, the great Thomist in Rome, Garrigou-Lagrange held that it was a sin for Frenchmen to join Charles de Gaulle – the legitimate government, to which all good Catholics should be obedient, was after all the one seated at Vichy. (It was also ostensibly pro-Catholic, unlike the secularism and anti-clericalism of the Combes regime.)

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Astrobiology and Christian Doctrine: Exploring the Implications of Life in the Universe by Andrew Davison, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2023, pp. xiv + 407, £30.00, hbk

The possibility of intelligent life existing on other planets raises many interesting theological questions. Would these extraterrestrial beings be religious? Would they have

been created in a state of Original Justice and then been infected with Original Sin? And if they were in need of redemption, would God become incarnate as one of their own to redeem them, or would God's incarnation as Jesus Christ be sufficient to redeem them? These are among many questions that the Anglican theologian Andrew Davison considers in this book. In addressing these questions, Davison draws much inspiration from St Thomas Aquinas. Davison's Thomistic approach is summarized in a quotation by Eric Mascall: 'I do not consider "Thomas has spoken, the case is closed" as the last judgement to be passed on any theological problem; my approach might be summed up in the words "Thomas has spoken, the matter is begun"'. Davison is, therefore, not afraid to dissent from opinions that many Thomists would want to defend, but, nevertheless, by using Thomas as a starting point, Davison's speculation on the existence of intelligent alien life provides an interesting context in which to engage with Thomas's theology and philosophy. So even if one is highly skeptical about whether intelligent alien life exists, Davison's book should still be of great interest to Thomists.

Davison begins by making a case for why we should take the possibility of intelligent alien life very seriously. Given the vast size of the universe, it would be surprising if there was not any life outside our solar system. In our galaxy alone, it is estimated that there are around two billion earth-like planets orbiting suns like ours, and our galaxy is one of approximately two hundred billion galaxies. So if there is some natural process by which life comes into existence when the conditions are right (an idea that many Thomists would be sympathetic to), then the chances of there being extraterrestrial life would seem highly probable.

Nevertheless, from a Thomistic perspective, it is still not obvious that one can conclude from this argument that *intelligent* extraterrestrial life is likely to exist as Davison supposes. As Davison notes later on in his book, Thomas thought that each human soul was created separately and individually by God rather than emerging in the natural process of things. Therefore, even if the secondary causes involved in the genesis of life on our own planet are at play on other planets in bringing life into existence, we would still have absolutely no idea whether God would choose to create creatures with rational souls on other planets. What we do know is that of the 7.7 million species of animals that have ever lived on the planet earth, only one species, namely our own (and possibly the species of our closest ancestors) can form the kind of linguistic communities in which rationality can express itself. Therefore, even though the current state of scientific knowledge suggests that it is very likely that there are species of life on other planets in the universe, we are still none the wiser as to how likely rationality exists among these species.

But if there *were* rational species on other planets, this does not necessarily pose serious challenges to the religious believer. According to Davison, non-religious people seem to overestimate the challenges that religious people would experience if faced with evidence of intelligent alien life. For example, it would be a mistake to suppose that such evidence would be a fundamental blow to Christian belief in humanity's specialness. Similar erroneous claims have been made with respect to the discovery that the earth is not at the centre of the cosmos, or that human beings evolved from apes.

The fact is, Christianity does not teach that human beings are at the pinnacle of God's creation. Rather, human beings are the lowest of God's creatures that possess a rational nature. There is a whole angelic hierarchy of superintelligent beings above

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us. Davison devotes a chapter to angels in which he argues that the discovery of super-intelligent life would not set a theological precedent, since the existence of such life has never been doubted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Davison also notes that until the modern era, being at the centre of the cosmos was not thought to be a sign of human specialness. Rather, the centre was thought to be the least exalted of places – the 'rubbish dump of the cosmos'.

There are, however, other challenges that the possibility of extraterrestrial life would raise, but the difficulties that Thomas had with extraterrestrial life resulted more from his erroneous scientific beliefs than from Christian theology. For instance, Thomas discounted the existence of other worlds capable of supporting life because he could not see how such a possibility was compatible with an Aristotelian picture of the cosmos with its concentric celestial spheres, and the belief that God in His ordaining wisdom had created the universe as a united whole of interrelated parts. But once one rejects this Aristotelian picture of the cosmos, it is not obvious that the existence of other worlds would pose a threat to God's ordaining wisdom.

Another question that Davison takes very seriously is whether the Son of God might have chosen to become incarnate as an alien. Davison favours a Scotist-inspired theory in which the son of God would assume an alien nature for every intelligent alien species that existed, regardless of whether members of this species had sinned and were in need of redemption. Davison argues that this hypothesis need not contradict the content of Christian revelation. This question is discussed in Chalcedonian terms: Jesus Christ is the Son of God, He is one person with two natures, a divine nature and a human nature, and Jesus Christ became incarnate in our human nature in order to redeem our nature.

But although Chalcedon states that God became incarnate in one human nature, according to Davison, this does not rule out the possibility that God could become incarnate in other natures as well. In fact, as Davison points out, St Thomas argued that multiple incarnations could be possible, so maybe God could become incarnate in some alien nature in addition to our own in order to redeem it. According to Davison, the fact that there is no mention of multiple incarnations in scripture is not a sufficient reason to discount this idea, since the revelation of scripture is primarily concerned with human salvation, so other incarnations would not be relevant.

However, although the question of whether God might have become incarnate as an alien may seem irrelevant to human redemption given our current state of knowledge, that could all change if we were ever to encounter such aliens. If these aliens were rational animals, then they would be essentially human according to the Aristotelian definition of the human species. The acts of redemption of an alien Messiah would then seem very relevant to human redemption. Davison would deny this conclusion by rejecting the suggestion that intelligent aliens could be considered as belonging to the human species. But I think Davison's counter argument would have to be much more compelling in order to convince me that multiple incarnations did not contradict divine revelation.

Another reason for being rather dubious about multiple incarnations is what this would mean for Mariology. If there are many incarnations, then presumably, there would be many mothers of God. Such a prospect seems to reduce the cosmic significance of the Blessed Virgin Mary. But Mary's title as Queen of Heaven suggests that she has the greatest cosmic significance. Although her human nature is inferior to

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that of angelic natures, through the fullness of God's grace, she has been raised up to be queen over the angels. Davison is far too ready to dismiss Catholic Mariology in his astrobiological speculations. Contra Davison, I don't think we do well to set the language of Mary's queenship aside.

Despite these criticisms, Davison's book is a very scholarly engagement with St Thomas. Even if one is not convinced by all of Davison's arguments, he asks the kinds of questions we should be asking about the theological implications of the existence of intelligent alien life.

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Christ, the Logos of Creation: An Essay in Analogical Metaphysics by John R. Betz, Emmaus Academic, Steubenville Ohio, 2023, 556 pages, hardcover, £49,32, ISBN: 978-1-945125-13-3

In his enlightening work, John Betz accomplishes a dual feat, skillfully emphasizing the profound ideas of Erich Przywara and their pivotal role in shaping Catholic theology during the 20th century, while concurrently executing a rich and constructive application of these foundational concepts. The book not only serves as a tribute to Przywara's intellectual legacy but also emerges as a compelling testament to Betz's ability continually to apply the ideas fruitfully, offering a fresh and insightful perspective on the intersections of metaphysics, theology, and the enduring relevance of Christ as the Logos of creation.

In part I, the book sets out to dispel false conceptions about analogy, specifically invalidating Barth's critique; in part II, Betz expounds on analogical metaphysics, to argue how that type of metaphysics is most apt in explaining Christian doctrine, and even how it serves as connective tissue that helps elucidate how the different Christian doctrines related to one another. In part III, the author sets out to apply analogy to some disputed questions (the list is not exhaustive), i.e., the relation of nature and grace (with specific attention to the debate between neo-Thomism and *Nouvelle theologie*), and a question in Trinitarian theology, the much debated *kenosis* originating in Hans-Urs von Balthasar, and how to integrate it more flawlessly into Catholic doctrine by the aid of Przywara's *analogia*-method. In part IV, which can be further subdivided into three section, Betz sets out to explain how analogical metaphysics serves Trinitarian theology, Christology, and anthropology, respectively, all culminating in the title given topic, how Christ is the Logos and Analogy of creation.

In delving into the profound implications of the term 'logos', Betz underscores the tendency to exclusively associate Christ with the Father's Word, neglecting his role as the Word of creation, encompassing its essence, foundation, pattern, goal, and inherent purpose (xvii). The concept of analogy, explored in its manifold meaning,