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Katedra filosofie a religionistiky

DISERTAČNÍ PRÁCE

**Reading Teresa of Avila through Aquinas:
on the Soul, Spiritual Development and Knowledge**

Mgr. Kateřina Kutarňová

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Vedoucí práce:
doc. Tomáš Machula, PhD., ThD.

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V Nové Vsi pod Pleší, 22. 8. 2020

*To my husband for everything I cannot put into words,
to my children who deem philosophy to be worthy of my time,
to Tomáš, my tutor, who has given me a taste of intellectual freedom,
to my spiritual Father, who has always shown the way to heaven.*

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List of Abbreviations

Teresa of Avila

V	Vida, The Life
CV	Camino de Perfección, Manuscript Valladolid, The Way of Perfection
M	Las Moradas del Castillo Interior, the Interior Castle
F	Libro de las Fundaciones, The Book of Her Foundations
CC	Cuentas de Conciencia, Spiritual Testimonies
MC	Meditaciones sobre los Cantares, Meditations on the Song of Songs

Teresa de Jesús, *Obras completas*, ed. Tomas Álvarez (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2001). *Cartas*, 4ta Edición, ed. T. Álvarez (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 1998).

Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 1–3, trans. Kavanaugh, Kieran and Rodriguez, Otilio, (Washington: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976–1980).

Thomas Aquinas

ST I	Summa Theologiae, prima pars
ST IaIIae	Summa Theologiae, pars prima secundae
ST IIaIIae	Summa Theologiae, pars secunda secundae
ST III	Summa Theologiae, tertia pars
SCG	Summa contra Gentiles
In Sent I	Scriptum super Sententiis, liber I
In Sent II	Scriptum super Sententiis, liber II
In Sent III	Scriptum super Sententiis, liber III
In Sent IV	Scriptum super Sententiis, liber IV
Super Io.	Super Evangelium S. Ioannis Lectura
Super Heb.	Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Hebraeos lectura
Super Rom.	Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos lectura
QDV	Questiones disputate De Veritate
De Malo	Questiones disputate De Malo
De Virt.	Questiones disputate De Virtutibus
DEE	De ente et essentia

Compendium Theologiae

Editio Leonina of Aquinas's works is used where possible, otherwise I use texts from Corpus Thomisticum, available at <https://www.corpusthomisticum.org/>.

The English translation of Aquinas's works: Fr. Laurence Shapcote, op (1864–1947), of the English Dominican Province, edited and revised by The Aquinas Institute, available at <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~ST.I>.

1. Introduction

1.1. BASIC LAYOUT OF THE WORK

The content of this work can be summed up in a single paragraph. In this work I introduce an interpretation of the major works of St Teresa of Avila in such a way as to show that a. her teaching is more complex and consistent throughout her corpus than is usually accepted, b. her teaching on the soul and the spiritual life follows a general pattern of three stages of the spiritual life (although some scholars have assumed it is not so), c. I assume that Teresa's teaching gains a new dimension and complexity hitherto un-dreamt of if we try to grasp her meaning through Aquinas's thought, and d. I try to point out the parallels between the two. Further, I ask more general questions about the mystical life, especially about the role of the will and intellect in the mystical stage of the spiritual life, mystical knowledge, and mystical marriage. The novelty of this work rests both in the interpretation of Teresa's teaching and highlighting the common traits between her and Aquinas.

On the one hand, this summary says everything necessary. On the other hand, it is insufficient for it raises further questions. What is my approach, in what field, how can we speak about the mysticism in any reasonable way, and why on earth Aquinas? The last question is probably the most compelling and confusing one. I wondered about how I was going to explain when an idea came to mind – I am going to describe the whole process that has led me onto Aquinas's track. This approach has several advantages (and probably few disadvantages, as every choice): first, it will enable me to show what I have lacked in the previous interpretations and why they did not satisfy my thirst for understanding St Teresa; second, I will be able to show how I have moved from modern hermeneutics to Aquinas; and third, it will enable me to set the whole problem into the historical context. By doing so in this introduction, it will not be necessary to return to these topics further in the text. Hence, the main focus will be on Teresa's teaching.

For all these reasons, this introduction is more extended than is usual. In fact, it forms a whole chapter. But I consider the time and space devoted to these topics well spent. The first specification concerns my approach. I have always been interested in the possibilities of expressing the 'mystical' (its nature, its grounding, etc.) in a rational way without the necessity of relying solely on the theology, or without falling into the trap of exalted emotional expressions, or silence too great for our reason. It may well be that the latter is true, and we really cannot make a rational statement thereof. But to say so without even an attempt seems a bit cheap. That is to say that the main focus of this work is the philosophical questions concerning the will and intellect in the mystical stage of the spiritual life culminating in the mysterious 'mystical marriage'. Even though I could directly jump into those questions, I will not do so. The reason is simple: it would be incomprehensible why I ask the question I do, why I ask them in the manner I do, and last but not least, both the question and the answers may be easily seem ungrounded in Teresa's texts and distant from her teaching. To avoid this danger, therefore, I provide first of all an interpretation of Teresa's teaching on the soul, the spiritual life, and prayer. However, I cannot simply take over some of the existing interpretations, since my own understanding of her teaching differs to a lesser or larger degree from others. However, this interpretation falls rather under the canopy of theology than philosophy, or it may easily give this impression. At this point, another distinction needs to be drawn.

Even though the first part may easily be seen as a theological one, it is not so completely, not from the methodological point of view. If my intention was simply to write a theological text, I would have considered it my duty to ground this part in Scripture and Tradition (contemporary works on spiritual life and other topics) to a significantly larger scale. However, since this work is and should be a philosophical one, I have not done so, but have chosen an approach that falls under the domain of modern philosophy instead, and that is hermeneutics (more details below).

Modern hermeneutics began with Friedrich Schleiermacher (himself a Protestant theologian), whose rudimentary notes were worked out by Wilhelm Dilthey, and both were a source of inspiration for Hans Georg Gadamer. Hermeneutics seems to be especially apt for work with religious texts coming from any religious tradition in an attempt to understand the tradition from within, without implementing terminology foreign to the religious tradition in question. I assume so especially due to the three basic, constituent elements of the hermeneutical method, a. the question of the relation between the language and the thought, b. treating the text as a form of inner speech (or variedly the oral traditions as a form of text), and c. the necessity of contextualising the given text on many levels.

Therefore, even though the interpretation of Teresa's texts may easily be seen as a theological one, it is not to be understood as 'theological' in the sense of being a result of theological inquiry in the academic sense of the word, for it is rather a result of a hermeneutical approach to Teresa's texts in the modern sense of the word. The theological character of this part is given by the sole fact that Teresa was a Christian and her own texts are deeply rooted in Christian theological thought. In other words, if we subject a text, which is in itself a theological one, to philosophical scrutiny, we cannot expect to gain a text which would be void of theology. Thus, the first part of this work is 'philosophical' in its approach but 'theological' in its content.

Since I subject a theological text, even a mystical one, to philosophical scrutiny and I see it necessary first to provide an interpretation of the theological thought behind those texts (Teresa's teaching), the result is a hybrid work divided into two more or less equally long parts: the part of the hermeneutical interpretation (theological) and the part of the philosophical inquiry into the 'mystical realm' according to Teresa.

The last question needed to be treated in this part regards why I ask philosophical questions about the mystical experience(s) and mystical marriage solely in connection to the works of Teresa of Avila and have not included other authors as well. Such a question is absolutely legitimate. The reasons are two-fold. The first reason is rather a personal one – a simple wish to understand Teresa. The inquiry into her works and secondary literature has subsequently raised some more general questions.

The second reason is given by the nature of the 'supernatural' itself. Since this sphere surpasses the experience of the majority of us, I assume it is easy to make false judgements thereof; it is easy to suppose that we have grasped the author's message whereas in reality we have not. Simply to suppose that we understand the message about the realm of reality surpassing our personal experience, which, *nota bene*, the mystics themselves generally find hard to put into words, seems at least naïve and probably untenable. In considering simply to make generalised philosophical statements proceeding from the anthology of mystics and superfluous understanding of their works seemed to me to hide a danger of serious misinterpretation, since the outer semblance does not necessarily mean inner identity. Such inner identity needs first to be proved in a very scrutinised inquiry. Such a task, however, far surpasses the format of a single doctoral thesis.

Therefore, I came to the conclusion that a safer approach, less keen to misjudgement, would be to choose one mystic as a 'case study', become knowledgeable of his or her works very well and try to come up with philosophical answers well-based in his or her works. The lot came to St Teresa for two reasons: first, her works remained for a long time obscure to me, and second, she is one of the most famous mystics of the church, even a doctor of the Church, and yet many love her

without really understanding her. Whereas the teaching of her beloved pupil, confessor/spiritual director and co-friar, St John of the Cross, is comparatively clear, hers is not. She has become a doctor of the church, but what does she teach us?

1.1.1. THEOLOGICO-INTERPRETATIONAL PART

The interpretational part starts with a general description of Teresa's ideas about the soul. The topics treated include the body-soul relation, the various kinds of 'division' of the soul and its relations to individual powers of the soul. Further, it deals with the symbol of the interior castle depicting its various meanings, Teresa's language, parallels between the teaching in the *Interior Castle*, *Life*, *Way of Perfection* and the *Meditations on the Song of Songs*. But first and foremost it provides the basic overview of the typical features of the individual dwelling places of the interior castle, that is both the parts of the soul and the stages of the spiritual journey.

If the second chapter may be understood as a description of the 'static element' of Teresa's teaching on the soul, the third chapter, on the contrary, can be understood as a description of the dynamic element of her teaching, or more precisely on the stages of the spiritual life. This chapter shows that Teresa's teaching on the spiritual life is compatible with the traditional division of the spiritual life into the three stages – *via purgativa*, *illuminativa* and *unitiva* and that it further has its correlative both in the 'static' and 'dynamic' element of the soul, or to say it otherwise, it is reflected in two dimensions of the symbol of the castle, one depicting what the nature of the soul is and the other depicting the activity of the soul. Finally, I show that there are two crucially important points of change closely connected to the voluntary decision of man. The choice taken has fundamental importance for any further spiritual development or deterioration.

The very activity of the soul in relation to the spiritual life is further treated in chapter four where it is shown that the proper act of the soul is prayer. To use Thomistic language, the acts of the soul directed to the maintenance of the body are omitted. Further, the ordinary way of intellection as described by Aquinas, is mentioned only insofar as is necessary for the understanding of the topic. Aquinas's thought on intellection is treated for the abovementioned reasons plus I see correlatives between his and Teresa's notions. That is to say, I do not plunge into modern, contemporary theories of cognition. This chapter closes the exclusively interpretational part of the work.

1.1.2. PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

This first part deals with what I believe are all the crucial cornerstones creating the fundament upon which the second part, the philosophical inquiry, may rest. The whole second part, that is, another three chapters, turn around three topics: the will, the intellect and mystical knowledge. All three subjects are very closely interrelated. Their mutual relations are so interwoven that I have found it hard to put some order into the topics that would enable the reader to make any sense of it all. Finally, I have chosen an approach which at first focuses on the higher intellectual powers, namely the will, the intellect and to a minor extent also the memory in chapter five, which then puts into focus the question of mystical knowledge in chapter six, and finally, in chapter seven to concentrate on the nature of the mystical marriage representing the very final stage of man's spiritual development. This chapter asks a peculiar question regarding whether the mystical marriage is or is not a pre-mortem beatific vision in the body and indeed, what is the relation between both states.

Even the description makes it clear that in this part I shortly step across the border of the natural and enter the realm of supernatural. Surely, this part is to a large degree a matter of speculation hardly to be absolutely proved or absolutely rejected; it is the realm of the probable. Therefore, in no way do I claim my conclusions to be foolproof. However, I claim them to form an inherently coherent theory well-founded upon a textual analysis of Teresa's texts and teaching, respecting all the requirements of the modern hermeneutical approach. Moreover, after the work on this thesis,

I am more than ever convinced that we can understand Teresa much better if we read her texts through the prism of Aquinas's own teaching. I hope I have managed to show the correlatives between the two satisfactorily, although much has had to have been left aside.

1.2. THAT WHICH WAS OMITTED

After the short summary and a somewhat longer overview of the structure of the work, it is necessary to mention what was left aside. First, my aim is not to write an exhaustive compendium about the life and thought of Teresa of Avila, therefore I omit a lot of biographical data since this can be easily found elsewhere, and I provide a brief sketch of the historical context she lived in. This is the reason why many topics found in Teresa's teaching could not have been included, basically for two reasons: a. the work would be enormous, and b. the main focus, a link like a silver line going through this work, would be distorted and the focus dispersed. Such topics include the monastic/patristic sources of Teresa's teaching together with the question of the nature of the *oración de quietud* and its relation to ἡσυχία and hence the question about the possibility of the common traits between the early modern western monastic tradition and the eastern one. I have also not included a very interesting topic of Teresa's confessors, their relations and mutual influence. Further, I have completely omitted the question of spiritual discernment. Also, I have consulted her letters only briefly and apart from one note have not included the *Book of Foundations* and her poetry. It is not that I do not know the texts but that, again, they do not represent so important a source for the present inquiry that it would be necessary to include them in the work more substantially.

Further, I have not included a Christological part and the question of the soul's participation in the inter-trinitarian relations, even though I briefly hint at the possibility in the last chapter. A single chapter devoted to this topic would be immensely interesting, however, it would move the work more to the field of theology, distorting the focus (the same reason as before), and I do not feel qualified enough to do this.

I also do not follow the 'psychological' link, nor the literary/linguistic one, nor am I interested in the role of women in the society of Teresa's time. Nor do I delve into the question of possible cabalistic sources in the Book of Zohar of her teaching.¹ I even do not aim at providing a general theory of Christian Mysticism. When I ask more general questions about the nature of mystical knowledge and mystical marriage, I do so exclusively in the context of Teresa's thought for the reasons mentioned. My conviction is that if I am able to become knowledgeable about the teaching of one mystic well, then he, or in this case she, can serve as a point of comparison for the others. That is to say, that if I am able to conclude what Teresa actually teaches about the mystical life, mystical knowledge, mystical marriage, etc., I have some ground upon which I can measure or compare the teaching of other mystics and only slowly and gradually build up a more general theory. Such a task, however, besides being an enormous one, is definitely one far surpassing the format of a single doctoral thesis.

Most surprisingly, though, I do not refer to St John of the Cross. There is a specific reason for such a decision. St John of the Cross and St Teresa were of course spiritually very close. She held him in high esteem and was glad to receive him as one of the first two male members of her reformed cloister. He also worked as her confessor for a couple of years and they consulted each other on matters spiritual. Of course, it would be logical to point out the parallels between their teachings – it would be fascinating. And this is the problem and the reason why I have deliberately chosen not to draw any comparison between the two. In some sense, it is another facet of the reason why I have chosen only one mystic and not many. Simply, to compare the two without knowing exactly (or as exactly as it is possible to know taking into account the mystical character of their teaching) what each of them says themselves, would lead to the danger of reading one's concepts into the other's works.

1 Cf., Catherine Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala: The Works of Luis De Leon, Santa Teresa De Jesus, and San Juan De La Cruz* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986); Sujana Jane Burgeson, *Mystical Symbolism in Teresa of Avila and Classical Kabbalah* (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI, 1998).

I do not say that there are no parallels between their teaching. There very probably are. Nor do I deny the possibility that their teachings are even identical. But I am convinced it is not possible to draw such a conclusion without knowing the corpus of their works through and through. Only then would it be possible to depict all the nuances of their meaning, as well as possible convergences and divergences. I do not know the works of St John of the Cross except superficially (by which I mean I have not read them more than twice) and at the beginning of this work I did not feel that I knew Teresa's thought well enough to be able to draw any parallel to the teaching of St John without risking a serious misunderstanding or superficial identification which would fall apart under a deeper scrutiny. So, I have decided to leave aside the works of St John and concentrate solely on the texts of St Teresa in an attempt to understand her first and foremost through her own texts (i.e., especially in the interpretational part).

Further, it is important to say that I do not interpret Teresa's teaching from within any general theory of the mystical life. The reasons for this decision are explained below. This also leads to the deliberate decision not to compare her teaching to any other religious system. Therefore, I try to understand Teresa's teaching from within her own texts as deeply rooted in Catholicism. Moreover, I think it is fair to admit my own roots are Catholic. That is to say that I attempt never to transgress the borders marked by Catholic teaching. But if I accidentally do so, I am prepared to correct my ways.

1.3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE INQUIRY

To keep this introduction as clear as possible, I have first summarised the whole project, then problematised it somewhat, saying what I do and what I do not do more specifically. Yet, there are points belonging to both categories (dos and don'ts) that need further clarification, namely the reasons for the chosen and rejected method need to be given. Some reasons have already been provided so in this section I focus only on the more prominent and more problematic points. Also, in this part I proceed in a reverted direction, starting by giving reasons why I *do not* follow certain methods and only in the next step do I say which method I follow, explicitly stating the basic principles. During the process I hope to clarify even more my position.

This part also covers a somewhat personal history, meaning the way in which I came to the approach I have chosen at last. Even though these personal notes are not important for the thesis as such and could be easily omitted without the loss of the meaning, I have decided briefly to mention them in order to show that the decision to read Teresa through Aquinas was not a spontaneous, nor whimsical, nor even straightforward one. These personal notes serve the purpose of completing the picture.

1.3.1. THE PERSONAL NOTES

I first started to read St Teresa in 2005 and I was immediately captivated by her texts. However, I was baffled by the *Interior Castle*, reading it and re-reading it, but I could not make any sense of it. My confusion led me to the decision to write a diploma thesis about this book with a purpose of finding any coherent interpretation that would help me to understand the text. However, I was studying religious studies by then and anyone familiar with that peculiar field of study knows that the question of methodology is a prominent one. At that time, I had already dismissed psychology as inappropriate for its reductionist character. C.G. Jung with his agnostic approach and concentration merely on the 'natural part', that is, the question of what purpose religion plays on the level of human psyche, seemed to me irrelevant for interpreting the text of which the larger part is concerned with the super-natural. For similar reasons other scholars counted among the religionists had been dismissed too. Finally, I ended up with phenomenology and modern hermeneutics. However, when I finished that thesis a rather bitter impression remained that those approaches did not serve the purpose well, that there must be yet more deeper meaning in Teresa's teaching, still to be uncovered. What is more, I have realised that phenomenology is not for me a convenient

approach. On the one hand, it is not a-priori reductionist, leaving a lot of room open for the individuality of the author himself (which cannot be automatically said about other approaches), and on the other hand, it seems to me that it is too subjectivist, that the interpretation of one scholar can easily be dismissed by another – that this approach lacks any point of comparison independent of the one or the other; or simply that it moves the ‘proof’ to the field of subjectivity to such an extent that I personally do not feel comfortable. Note that by saying so, I do not disregard phenomenology as such, but merely state that I am not a good phenomenologist.

At this point, the impression that I have left something significant of Teresa’s meaning undiscovered was pressing hard and so I started to think about a PhD project. The question of what method to follow surfaced once again. With phenomenology down, the hermeneutics remained (the basic rules of hermeneutical approach will be described below). During the process of planning the project I went through my previous inquiry once again and thought about topics I might have underestimated before. Perhaps I was not evaluating the historical context enough. But then it emerged that I had evaluated the historical context enough, taking into consideration the context of Teresa’s own life, but had I not considered the intellectual milieu of her time enough? So, what was the intellectual context of her period? What about Scholastics (sometimes called second scholastics)? Oh my, must I really delve into *that* field? Well, if you wish to follow the rules of hermeneutics as your method of choice, you should, namely if you also wish to understand Teresa and all the trains of thought of the twentieth century have been sufficient, you should. Moreover, she had several very well-educated confessors, Domingo Báñez, for example, and what do you know about him? Nothing, really, so I had to admit to myself that I had overlooked a really important context of Teresa’s life and teaching that might be the key to understand her.

However, after I started to work on my PhD thesis and slowly came to know my way through baroque scholasticism, I soon realised that Teresa’s thought is much simpler than that of Báñez and others, that she does not ask many peculiar questions that they do, that she does not make such subtle distinctions as is common among the philosophers of her period. Yet, the vocabulary she uses in connection to the soul seems to fit in place. Moreover, I have also realised that later commentaries on Teresa hardly ever mention Báñez. But there are those that return to Aquinas. But Báñez was one of the scholars who is considered to be one of the most faithful interpreters of Aquinas of that period. And moreover, Aquinas’s teaching still remained a point of reference to all the baroque scholastics irrespective of the question of how far they actually distanced themselves from him. Besides, Báñez served as a confessor and spiritual director of Teresa for a few years and they remained friends for the rest of their lives. But the confessional is not a place to teach the penitent my latest personal theological or philosophical speculation, but rather a place where the solid teaching of the Mother Church, perhaps supported by some indisputable authority like Aquinas, is transmitted.

At last, I took a rather risky and in any case adventurous step and tried to find out whether there are or there are not any convergences between Teresa and Aquinas and, if so, whether reading Teresa through Aquinas would not actually lead to a deeper understanding of Teresa herself. This thesis is the outcome. However, before immersing ourselves in the fascinating world of Teresa’s symbols, ecstasies, locutions, mystical union and prayer, it is necessary to keep the tension yet a little longer and pay due respect to the topics necessary for understanding her and understanding my approach.

1.3.2. PROBLEM OF METHOD

Above, I have only hinted at the reasons why I have not considered some other approaches. There is much to say on the history of the research of mysticism. Often the scholars relevant for the inquiry into this topic are also numbered among the researchers in the field of religious studies (*Religionswissenschaft*). Although I am fairly familiar with the latter group – W. James, R. Otto,

F. Heiler, G. Van der Leeuw, C.G. Jung, S. Freud to name at least some – I prefer to give a voice in this part to an outstanding scholar who has published a five volume work about western mysticism, Bernard McGinn.²

McGinn has added an extended study about the history of the research of mysticism at the end of the first volume of his *opus magnum*. He enumerates the most important works from the fields of theology, philosophy and psychology. He managed to summarise the important points of every scholar mentioned, and also has quite aptly highlighted the problematic traces of each concept. He also successfully sketched the mutual relations between the scholars of mysticism, possible antagonism between them and the ‘evolution of ideas’.³

Among those approaching mysticism from the theological point of view, B. McGinn enumerates several important figures both from the Protestant and the Catholic sides. He mentions F. Schleiermacher (an important figure also for the development of hermeneutics but more on that further), Adolf von Harnack, the antagonists of mysticism Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, and further Paul Tillich, Albert Schweitzer and finally Evelyn Underhill.

I wish to pause at her name a little. Although others were better scholars and represent significant figures in the development of Protestant theology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, her work *Mysticism* has been one of the most influential books ever since she has published it in 1911. This work soon gained in massive popularity. I am not going to provide an exhaustive account of this work here, but I wish to highlight several points. She built her teaching on the notion of ‘transcendental order’ irrespective of the theological terms this transcendental order is expressed in. Man’s goal, then, is to reach total harmony with such an order. The second problematic point is her assumption that mysticism forms the true core of religion, that is, every religion. She is one of those figures who are convinced that the mystical path to harmony with the transcendental is cross-cultural and trans-religious. In other words, she is convinced of the fundamental unity of all the religions and of the identity of the nature of mystical experience irrespective of the religious tradition it is found in.⁴

There are several names from the Catholic part of the field of theology to be mentioned. The first is Edward Cuthbert Butler. McGinn sees this personage as someone who tried to convert interest into Christian mysticism from Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross to an older tradition. The reason for this turn is especially appealing – it is the supposed stress put on the extra-ordinary supernatural experiences. Butler wanted to bring the ‘mysticism’ more down to earth.⁵ However, Teresa herself, although meticulously enumerating all the possible spiritual states and peculiar experiences that may befall man in the mystical stage of the spiritual life would agree with Butler himself, both in his claim that the extraordinary experiences are not that important, are not even necessary for a mystic to be a mystic, and she would also agree with him that mysticism was ‘for anyone’ under certain circumstances. Therefore, my impression is that it was (and perhaps had been) rather misinterpreting Teresa that stood in the centre of Butler’s ‘critique’.

B. McGinn adds: ‘Butler’s return to the “simple practical mysticism” [...] was an important departure in contemporary Catholic discussion of mysticism, which centred on Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross as witnesses and which looked to the theology of Thomas Aquinas for its theoretical concepts.’⁶ This remark is of special concern for it shows very clearly that in Butler’s time there was a strong tendency to read Teresa of Avila through the prism of Aquinas’s thought.

Two other scholars are worth mentioning – Augustin-Francois Poulain and Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange. Both wrote influential books on mysticism and/or the spiritual life and both of

2 Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, Vol. 1 (New York: Crossroad, 2003); *The Growth of Mysticism*, Vol. 2 (New York: Crossroad, 1994); *The Presence of God: The Flowering of Mysticism*, Vol. 3 (New York: Crossroad, 1998).

3 B. McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, Appendix: Theoretical Foundations: The Modern Study of Mysticism, pp. 265–343.

4 Ibid., pp. 273–274.

5 Ibid., pp. 275–276.

6 Ibid., p. 276.

them appear also in this work. The former due to Trueman Dicken, one of the best commentators on Teresa's teaching, who has discussed the types of prayer described by Teresa in a dialogue with Poulain. I refer to the debate further in the text because I disagree with both of them and upon their mutual discussion demonstrate why I think Teresa's notion of the types of prayer is different from their presentations.

I refer to the latter for two reasons. First, he 'brought much erudition and a clear and powerful mind to task of showing how St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross were in fundamental agreement on the universality of the call to the mystical life,' to use the words of McGinn.⁷ However, it is not only John of the Cross, but Teresa as well. In the second volume of his *Three Ages of the Spiritual Life*, there are several chapters on Teresa's teaching on prayer and they are explicitly put into connection to Aquinas's teaching.⁸

The other well-known names connected to the study of mysticism are those of Bernard Lonergan and Thomas Merton. The first reinterpreted Aquinas in a considerable way. However, there remains doubt about his proper understanding of Aquinas.⁹ What is more, he put too much stress on building a new theological method rooted in critical cognitional theory.¹⁰ I am not convinced that such a modern tool based on a notion of man different from the Christian notion of man, and therefore also with a psychology considerably different from Christian psychology is an ideal tool to interpret someone like Teresa who was very much a daughter of her age. The other is well known and widely read. Although his books have been a source of inspiration to many readers, they still belong rather to the category of popular spiritual literature. Therefore, they are not especially useful as academic sources.

Further, Bernard McGinn summarises the contribution to the study of mysticism of such personages as Anselm Stolz, Jean Daniélou, Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar. He gives quite a lot of space especially to K. Rahner. However, none of these authors are of special concern for this work so I will not mention them further. Therefore, I direct the interested reader first to study B. McGinn and then to the works of those scholars themselves, if he were interested so.

That said, it is time briefly to mention the scholars from the ranks of philosophers interested in 'mysticism'. The first listed by McGinn is William James and his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. He is further mentioned again in the section about the psychologists. His name is a famous one and he is counted among the founders of religious studies. However, as any student of that field knows very well, his remarkable study is somewhat outdated today for it is shattered by the anthropological evidence collected since his book was published. B. McGinn points out several more problematic points of his teaching. First, it is his notion of religion as the 'lived experienced of individuals' and assumption that religious feelings and actions are essentially similar although the intellectual content and/or belief may vary. Second, he sees personal religious experience to be rooted in a 'mystical state of consciousness'. Third, he put too much emphasis on feelings and

7 Ibid., p. 279.

8 Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange. *The Three Ages of Interior Life*, vol. I, II (London: Catholic Way Publishing, 2013), pp. 327–336; 401–409; 604–614. Although this book has been invaluable source of teaching on the spiritual life I do not, regrettably, refer to it much often and if so, then usually only to several general ideas. It 'suffers' by being too long, detailed and profound and I found it hard to direct the reader to any specific place or to only a few pages. I have also found it impossible to choose some specific passages for a direct citation. But if anyone is interested in a book as a spiritual guide, I cannot recommend a better work.

9 Terry Tekippe has shown that at least Lonergan's understanding of Aquinas's teaching on the will was to a considerable degree biased if not directly misunderstood. But the will plays a crucial role in Teresa's teaching on the spiritual life and nature of the will as will be shown. Also, I will show that Aquinas's teaching on the will provides a very useful tool to understand Teresa's own position. Therefore, to resort to Lonergan's support does not seem to be totally appropriate. However, M. Fröllich did just this. On the other hand, to be honest, she focused more on Lonergan's notion of a religious conversion than on his understanding of Aquinas. Terry J. Tekippe, *Lonergan and Thomas on the Will: An Essay in Interpretation* (Lanham: Univ. Press of America, 1993); Mary Fröhlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic: A Study of Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1994).

10 B. McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, p. 283.

affects (and we shall see further on in the work that these are the first to be cleansed and thereby submit to the higher powers of the soul, especially the intellect, according to Teresa). He also somewhat overlooks the relation between perception and knowing (conceptual knowing). Fourth, he also claims that the mystic ‘overcomes all usual barriers between himself and the Absolute’. Hence, fifth, he ends up with a notion of ‘mysticism’ as an all-encompassing phenomenon, transgressing the usual division or distinction between different religious traditions; in fact, he is convinced that on the level of ‘mysticism’ all religions are one and identical. He sometimes called his conviction ‘pluralistic mysticism’ and was convinced that God was finite.¹¹

McGinn concludes with an uncompromising critique. James was too concentrated on the private side of the religion overlooking the ‘institutional one’. But far more serious is his almost exclusive emphasis of the affects which led him to a too shallow and simplistic understanding of the ‘interactions between the experience and interpretation, feeling and thought.’ This in turn means that his theory cannot account for more speculative forms of western mysticism.¹²

McGinn further mentions several other important names, however, I will only enumerate their list here before stopping at another scholar important for the present inquiry. McGinn provides quite a long presentation on Friedrich von Hügel; he then mentions Henri Bergson, Michel de Certeau, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, A.J. Ayer, W.T. Stace, N. Söderblom, R. Otto, R.C. Zaener, W. Wainwright, S. Katz and James R. Price III.¹³ He also mentions Joseph Maréchal as the ancestor of ‘transcendental thomism’, who was also sceptical about the possibilities of the modern sciences like the newly developing secular psychology in the study of religions and religious phenomena in general, and mysticism is particular. McGinn shows that his theory of mysticism is ambiguous, confusing, mixing the philosophy of essence and existence. Further, he also concluded that all the teaching of all the Christian mystics is basically the same with a doubtful choice of sources which included also popular anthologies only with excerpts of the genuine texts.¹⁴

Maurice Blondel is an interesting scholar for he wrote on the connaturality of knowing which has both the natural and supernatural mode.¹⁵ This topic appears again in the work of the outstanding figure of Jacques Maritain, whose theory of the degrees of knowledge will appear in the latter chapters of this work. However, before providing a little space to Maritain himself, I would like to cite McGinn’s notes on one aspect of Blondel’s thought:

Blondel says that the natural dynamism of the intellect calls out for unitive mystical knowledge though the actual reception of the divine mystery remains a supernatural gift. Citing John of the Cross, he resumes themes typical of central traditions in Western Christian mysticism, especially by emphasizing that in the highest mystical states ecstatic experiences cease as love and knowledge are unified and subsumed in a harmonious life.¹⁶

This citation is interesting for I believe that this is what Teresa herself teaches and which I try to show in the relevant chapter. I do not refer to Blondel, though, since there does not seem to be any direct connection to Aquinas or at least Thomism. This is not the case with the previous name to which I would like to refer to slightly more extensively – Jacques Maritain. Besides the aforementioned *Degrees of Knowledge*, with which I work further in the theses, it is also necessary to mention his affiliation to Neo-Thomism. What he did was that in that book he put the explicit link Aquinas and St John of the Cross. He tried to create a complete and comprehensive study of possible forms or modes of knowledge, including mystical knowledge as described by John of the Cross. As his starting point and at the same time a point of reference, he used the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. Although it is not a mere repetition of Aquinas’s teaching but an original piece

11 B. McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, pp. 291–293.

12 Ibid., p. 293. Direct citation on the same page.

13 Ibid., pp. 291–326.

14 Ibid., pp. 293–302.

15 Ibid., pp. 302–303.

16 Ibid., p. 303.

of philosophical inquiry, the whole work is rooted and planted in Aquinas's teaching a lot. Since I provide a more detailed account of this work in the last chapter, where it serves a much better purpose than it would in the introduction, I am not going into greater detail at this point.¹⁷

The last branch of inquiry into mysticism that remains to be briefly mentioned is the one, McGinn calls 'comparativist's and psychological approaches to mysticism'. In this section McGinn mentions N. Söderblom, William James (again), and R. Otto and his *Idea of the Holy* following in the footsteps of F. Schleiermacher. Further, he mentions K. Barth, Friedrich Heiler, James J. Leuba, and of course, S. Freud and C. G. Jung. He also does not forget to mention J. Wach, M. Eliade and G. Van der Leeuw. Finally, he concludes his study by an extended note on G. Scholem and the more recent A. Huxley.¹⁸ From all of these names I am going to mention only C. G. Jung and F. Schleiermacher, the former because many recent theologians and commentaries of St Teresa resort to his teaching in an attempt to read Teresa through the prism of Jungian psychology,¹⁹ and the latter because of his early sketches on the modern hermeneutics which serve to a certain degree as a directive for the method of this work.²⁰

C. G. Jung did not himself write extensively on the topic of mysticism but one of his disciples and followers, Erich Neuman, did. Neuman depended heavily on Jungian self-integration. He seems to put the realm of the mystical only into the sphere of human psyche and therefore does not see it as touching upon extraneous (or extra-mental) reality (e.g., 'transcendence') but understands the 'mystical' solely as the deepest degree of the human psyche. He also believed his teaching to be a faithful application of Jung's own teaching regarding the sphere of the 'mystical'.²¹ B. McGinn limits his own criticism to Erich Neuman and does not mention C.G. Jung himself much. Therefore, I wish to make an exception from the chosen method and insert my own criticism of C.G. Jung in an attempt to show why I do not find his approach to be a suitable one for interpreting Teresa (or, in fact, any Christian source).

The first problem, a serious one, is his method of inquiry. He deliberately chose which 'case' to include and which to exclude from his research in an obvious attempt to support an already pre-conceived theory. Such an approach would not be defensible face-to-face with the current requirements for creating a representative psychological sample. Moreover, it follows that his conclusions, and therefore also his theory, are dubious. It can be seen as one of many fascinating and perhaps even inspiring attempts to understand man's psyche (especially in its connection to religion) but can hardly serve as a medium of interpretation. Second, C.G. Jung's thought background was clearly dualistic (positive and negative principle, anima vs. animus, strife for harmony between the feminine and the masculine principle, etc.), influenced by eastern religions (esp. Taoism). As such, it is a highly inappropriate tool for interpreting anything grounded in monotheism in general, and Christian in particular, for to do so would mean to considerably change the basic perspective and therefore to misunderstand the phenomenon in question, in our case the teaching of St Teresa.

17 Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge* (Glasgow: University Press [year omitted]); Summary provided also by B. McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, pp. 305–310.

18 B. McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, pp. 326–343. I intentionally do not provide a more detailed account about each and every scholar interested in the study of mysticism but rely on a general knowledge of the readers, whom I suppose to be acquainted with most of the names mentioned. However, if they are not, McGinn's Study serves as an excellent starting point introducing the reader into the problematics and at the same time directing them further.

19 Interestingly, I have not noted attempts to read her teaching through Freudian psychology although Freud has been a far more resourceful author for the later generations of scholars in the field of religious studies.

20 Actually, I deem his manuscripts on hermeneutics far more interesting and useful for the general study of religion than his far more known teaching on the 'feeling of absolute dependence'. The reason is that the latter teaching is more captivating but less grounded in the data concerning manifold religious traditions and assembled since his time. Therefore, we can either accept or deny this concept and our acceptance or denial will be, as I believe, motivated and given by our personal belief. However, it is not a particularly useful concept for interpreting anything, much less from a different religious tradition. On the other hand, his hermeneutics meticulously pay attention to minimising the personal and subjective impairments that might be brought into the text by the interpreter. There is more on this in the body of the main text.

21 B. McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, pp. 333–334.

Third, there is a problem with the self-made paradoxes he immersed himself in. On the one hand, he states that he remains an agnostic in the sense that he is not interested in the questions of the (non)existence of God or which is the true religion, but only in the question of what function the 'religion' plays on the level of the psyche. Therefore, he distances himself from any reference to the transcendental order and limits himself and limits his statements to the realm of the natural and purely human. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to give 'good' advice both to believers and to Christianity itself as to what they should do in order to adapt their beliefs/teaching to the human psyche for the purpose of suiting it better. By adapting the teaching to the human psyche, he naturally means adapting it to the human psyche as he himself understands it. Thus, he gives advice like inserting Our Lady into the Most Holy Trinity, for the most holy quaternion would suit the human psyche better or he deems Our Lord to be a mere archetype, not a living person.²² But by such (and other) statements he explicitly refers to the metaphysical or supernatural order and in fact leaves his promulgated agnostic positions. For such statements already are statements about the supernatural and already touch upon transcendence.

Moreover, such a lack of respect for the Christian tradition, the Most Holy Mother of God and the Most Holy Trinity, would be horrendous and absolutely unacceptable for Teresa herself, who did not save on words of praise and adoration for the almighty God and paid respect to the teaching of the Catholic Church. Thus, to subdue her own teaching to a system of thought which is in its fundament radically different from her own milieu leads, according to my opinion, to an anachronism and is radically incompatible. Therefore, any interpretation of Teresa's teaching through the Jungian prism necessarily leads to misunderstanding, because the categories used, the mental frame or perhaps better to say the underlying worldviews are radically different.

That said, there remains only Schleiermacher to be treated more extensively. Since I wish to speak about him in the part about modern hermeneutics, I will leave him now and return to him later. For, after providing a very short overview of the past (roughly) one hundred and fifty to two hundred years of research into mysticism, I would like to formulate several problems that are of a more general character, since they can be found in this or that variation in the works of multiple authors. This will enable me to formulate more explicitly than I have already done in treating individuals with the possibility to point out why I do not find their approaches suitable for interpreting Teresa. That in turn will move us closer to the final answer: why Aquinas?

Before doing so, however, I wish to point out a prevalent problem of 'mysticism', which was already hinted at by the previous overview of the possible approaches to the topic. The problem is that mysticism, just like 'time' of 'religion', does not have any all-encompassing characteristic or definition. B. McGinn notes that words like 'mysticism' or 'mystic' 'tend to be used with the presumption that others will have at least some grasp of the referent.' He further cites Dean Inge, Cuthbert Butler and Louis Dupré all of whom vehemently warned of the uncleared and sometimes misused term 'mysticism' and/or 'mystic'.²³

Now, there are several points that can be concluded from McGinn's study. First, the absolute majority of researchers in the field of mysticism built their theories upon an unreflected supposition that mystical experience is identical across various religious traditions. That is, the mystics across the religious traditions share the same experience. This position was held, for example, by Evelyn Underhill, William James and others, as we have seen.

22 Carl Gustav Jung, *Archetyp und Unbewusstes* (Olten: Walter, 1990); Carl Gustav Jung, *Mensch und Seele Aus dem Gesamtwerk*, ausgewählt und herausgegeben von Jolande Jacobi (Ostfildern: Patmos Verlag 2019); Carl Gustav Jung, *Duše moderního člověka* (Brno: Atlantis, 1994); Carl Gustav Jung, Helmut Barz, *Menschenbild und Gottesbild* (Olten: Walter-Verlag, 1992); Carl Gustav Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (London: Fontana Press, 1995); Harold Coward, "Taoism and Jung: Synchronicity and the Self", *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 46, no. 4, 1996, pp. 477–495.

23 Dean Inge: 'No word in our language – not even socialism – has been employed more loosely than "Mysticism".'; Cuthbert Butler: 'There is probably no more misused word in these days than "mysticism".'; Luis Dupré: 'No definition could be both meaningful and sufficiently comprehensive to include all experiences that, at some point or other, have been described as "mystical".' Cited in McGinn, B. *The Foundations of Mysticism*, p. 266.

There have always been, on the contrary, a few more cautious researchers, who did not share such an enthusiasm about the ‘mystical’, as for example Anselm Stolz and Henri de Lubac. I belong to the latter group for several reasons. First, the goals and means to reach these goals differ significantly across the religious traditions. The outer similarity of the experience does not necessarily establish the inner identity. Moreover, the goals to reach the relevant end quite often differ significantly – in some branches of Buddhism, for example, the goal is reached by man’s own efforts, whereas in other branches (like the Tibetan one), magic is involved. Magic and other ritualistic behaviour is involved also in many branches of other religions, whereas Teresa vehemently holds that the ‘mystical experience’ is given by God and man cannot reach it by his own efforts in any way.

Further, there is no point of comparison which would enable us to discern the mystical from the non-mystical, yet religious experience. In the later chapters we will see that Teresa knows (like many other Christian spiritual writers) non-mystical spiritual experiences and, what is more, she also knows mystical experiences void of any ‘extravagant’ tokens, like ecstasies, trance or levitation. In fact, she provides criteria for accepting some kinds of prayer as mystical. But if we took those ‘extravagant phenomena’ as a sure sign of the ‘mystical’, then many experiences Teresa would consider to be ‘mystical’ would fall out of this category. What is more striking is her discernment. She knows ‘false mystical experiences’ which have, according to her, a root either in evil spirit(s) or in human nature (e.g., a nature prone to fantasies). However, even though these experiences may have very similar super-natural manifestations, she would not include them under the rank ‘mystical’. What Teresa herself deems to mean by ‘mystical’ and what is and is not a ‘mystical experience’ will be one of the secondary questions of this thesis to be answered in the conclusion.

Therefore, the theories which rest more or less on an intuitive understanding of ‘mystical’ – and those are in majority, as B. McGinn shows – fall short of being able to explicate St Teresa’s notion of the mystical since they do not account for the whole range of ‘mystical experiences’ Teresa understands as mystical and, on the contrary, would include experiences which Teresa would not consider to be mystical in nature.

What is more, the general theories of mysticism relying on the enumeration of seemingly similar mystical phenomena on the one hand, and on the somewhat intuitive understanding of the ‘mystical’ on the other, do not seem to be able to provide criteria upon which to say which of the spiritual experiences are or are not to be deemed mystical. Are the naked digambaras of the jains sweeping their path with a broomstick, dying of hunger for the sake of reaching their goal, nirvana, living the practice of ahimsa to the highest possible degree to be considered mystics or not? Are shamans using drugs during their rituals ‘mystics’ just because they reach some kind of changed state of consciousness? Do they reach the same state as St Teresa speaking about the mystical marriage? Sadly, this last question cannot be satisfactorily answered at this point, firstly because we are still to consider what Teresa actually teaches, and secondly it would take another comprehensive study to track the answer. I have included these questions merely to illustrate that the seemingly obvious and unproblematic assumption that mystical experiences somehow must be the same and of the same reality becomes complicated once one delves deeper into the history of religions.

1.3.3. SCHLEIERMACHER’S HERMENEUTICS: BASIC PRINCIPLES

Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics is not as well-known as it should be for it is a fascinating project, in many ways foreshadowing the further development of this field of study. But there is one problem hindering the study of his interpretational approach. Although Schleiermacher lectured on hermeneutics both at university and in public, he did not pick up his teaching in a comprehensive study. Thus, what remains are his lectures, sometimes completed with the notes of his students.²⁴

²⁴ There are two basic editions of these summoned lectures. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik mit besonderer Beziehung auf das Neue Testament*, ed. Friedrich Lücke (G. Raimer, Berlin 1838). Lücke was Schleiermacher’s student and friend. His edition, however, is incomplete, including only one concept of the lecture and the notes of other students.

In a creative dialogue with the previous hermeneutical approaches (*hermeneutica sacra, profana* and *juris*), he aims at creating an interpretational approach which would give one a tool to grasp the meaning of any given text.²⁵ The adjective ‘any’ is the crucial word here. He tries to create a ‘general hermeneutics’ that would enable man to interpret any given text from any field and/or any given tradition.²⁶

This leads him to formulate several basic rules the interpreter should follow if he wishes to understand the text in front of him. First, there are two fundamental ideas that are present in any process of interpretation, one concerns the text itself and one concerns the interpreter. The former idea is that there is a deeply rooted sense in every text which may not necessarily be obvious at the first glance and which should, therefore, be discovered. He conceives this sense as a fundamental, general idea which, if grasped, gives meaning to every single particular of the text, like a picture one has when he finishes the jigsaw puzzle. Every single piece may have a meaning of its own, may point in the direction of the whole but it cannot contain the whole in itself.²⁷ This whole, the ultimate sense of the text, is seen only when the puzzle is finished and then even the singular pieces are set into their environment, or proper context. Indeed, Schleiermacher may be understood as implicitly anticipating the concept of the ‘hermeneutical circle’.²⁸ The latter fundamental idea of any interpretation is that at the beginning of reading, man does not actually understand even though he may have a false impression that he does. Schleiermacher reasons that if man actually understood, there would never appear a moment of non-comprehension. If, on the other hand, man comes upon a passage he does not understand, it shows that he has not understood properly from the very beginning. For if he did, he would have been able to grasp the meaning of every single part of the text, for he would be able to set it into the proper context of the whole text and there would be no place for misunderstanding then.²⁹ This idea may be re-formulated as one of the basic rules of his hermeneutics: ‘the whole from the parts and the parts from the whole’.³⁰

Further, he distinguishes his approach into two main branches – the grammatical and the

The second, much more complete edition, Fr. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik, nach den Handschriften neu herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Heinz Kimmerle* (Winter, Heidelberg 1959), includes all the preserved materials without the student notes. For my work, I use the later edition *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, ed. Manfred Frank (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1977), which also exists in an English translation: F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics, the Handwritten Manuscripts*, edited by Heinz Kimmerle, translated by J. Duke and J. Forstman (Scholar Press for American Academy of Religion, Missoula, Montana 1977). Frank added a very detailed, approximately one hundred page study to his edition. Besides, the English translation entails further study both into the original texts and into the Kimmerle edition.

- 25 The incessant polemics with his predecessors is especially remarkable in the fifth manuscript. Fr. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik, nach den Handschriften neu herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Heinz Kimmerle* (Winter, Heidelberg 1959), pp. 123–156. Besides, Schleiermacher’s special aim was to ‘liberate’ the hermeneutics from the realm of interpreting Scripture and in a somewhat romantic manner try to establish its place within the scope of other sciences to conclude that the general hermeneutics belong rather to the realm of arts than the sciences. However, I do not treat this aspect of his teaching in greater detail. See, F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 75, 78.
- 26 Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 75–76, 79, 82, 85, 89. H.G. Gadamer notes on this topic, that ‘Schleiermacher [...] no longer seeks the unity of hermeneutics in the unity of the content of tradition [...] but rather seeks it [...] in the unity of procedure that is not differentiated even by the way the ideas are transmitted.’ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 179.
- 27 It is noteworthy that he is not so naive as to suppose that any given text of any given genre (e.g., sms or shopping list) needs a special method of interpretation. He discerns between two basic categories of texts – the plain ones including only meaning(s) and the ‘literary ones’, including also the fundamental sense besides (supposedly many) meanings. His search for a general hermeneutics is, of course, aimed at the latter group. See F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 78–79.
- 28 The concept of ‘hermeneutical circle’ was explicitly formulated by Schleiermacher’s disciple and follower, Wilhelm Dilthey.
- 29 H.G. Gadamer saw this step as something fundamentally new, Schleiermacher’s inalienable contribution to the hermeneutics. He notes that Schleiermacher understood that the interpretation was deeply interwoven with the understanding not only of the ‘facts’ but rather of the inner world and convictions of the author. Gadamer further confirms that the hermeneutics in the stricter sense (that is, hermeneutics applied to texts which are not intuitively understood at once) always proceed from misunderstanding and not a lack of understanding. H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 184–185.
- 30 F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 54–71, 82–83, 87. In MS 2, he summarises the conditions under which man may assume that he has truly understood: ‘Zweifache Maxime des Verstehens. Alles verstanden wo kein Nonsens auffällt. Nichts verstanden was nicht konstruiert ist.’ *Ibid.*, p. 56. Note, that the ‘konstruiert’ stands for ‘interpreted’. Gadamer, however, sets the record straight and shows that this rule has much deeper roots in biblical hermeneutics and can also be found in the works of Schleiermacher’s predecessors; Schleiermacher only took it over and applied also to the general hermeneutics. H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 176–177.

psychological.³¹ The grammatical interpretation can be summarised quite easily. I will not go into details, since it is not necessary for this thesis. Schleiermacher argues that the grammar is indispensable for the interpretation even though it does not suffice alone to lead the reader to the ultimate sense of the text.³² The rule: ‘whole from the parts and parts from the whole’ is applied here as well, which means that the interpreter should pay very close attention not only to the language of the text but also to the mutual relations between the grammatical parts of the text and to do so on all possible levels imaginable starting with the context of a single word, proceeding to the level of sentence, paragraph, chapter, book.³³

The psychological or technical interpretation surpasses the borders of the grammatical interpretation and is complementary to it. It aims at trying to understand the author’s psychology, or his inner world, through the mediacy of his own texts. Neither way of interpreting is, according to Schleiermacher, sufficient to reach the ultimate sense of the work nor does it suffice to put the two together in a purely mechanical way. One must take both modes of interpretation into account and yet search for the ultimate sense behind their summary; it rather resembles strife for a higher kind of unity.³⁴

This is reached through a circular movement back and forth between various parts of the text, with various chapters. What adds to the act of understanding is contextualising – setting the work into the context of the author’s own life and his times, but first and foremost to try to grasp the ultimate sense of the text through the text itself, through the language used and not used. This is important, since it means one has to be very cautious not to insert into the interpretation elements too different to the thought of the author.

Hence, in case of Teresa of Avila, for example, one has to be very cautious not to read her text (no matter whether explicitly or implicitly) through any modern prism like gender theory, for both the language and the thought of Teresa are very distant from the concepts thereof. On the other hand, Teresa uses terms and expressions that hint very directly to the field of Thomistic/scholastic psychology.³⁵

Schleiermacher quite surprisingly also states that the interpreter is not called simply to grasp the meaning(s) and sense of the author himself but to surpass even the understanding of the author himself. Schleiermacher is convinced that this ‘going beyond’ is made possible through the distance the interpreter has both from the text and the author enabling him better to set the text into all necessary contexts.³⁶ For example, when St Teresa wrote the *Interior Castle* during a period of much strife, at a rapid pace, often suffering from headaches, sometimes being in a trance-like state, she might not have been able to realise how much sense and how many meanings she has in fact inserted into the text. However, her interpreters are, according to Schleiermacher, in a ‘better’

31 ‘Gramatische Interpretation’; ‘technische/psychologische Interpretation’.

32 It is noteworthy that the part of Schleiermacher’s dealing with the grammatical interpretation also contains fascinating passages about various levels of the language from the most general (English, German, etc.) to the most individual. Also, he concerns himself a lot with the question of the relation between the language and thought. F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 57–67, 86–103. Pages 92–97 are especially devoted to the topic of general language.

33 The grammatical part of interpretation is dealt with especially in MSS 2–3, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 57–67, 86–103. Schleiermacher goes into excruciating details, even considering the relations of individual sounds within every single word. To be honest, taking into account that the translator’s rule says that the smallest unit of meaning for translator is the sentence, and not a word, this point of Sch. hermeneutics seems a bit exaggerated.

34 It is noteworthy that Schleiermacher recognises a natural gift or ‘sense’ for interpretation which an individual either has or has not. He even calls it a ‘divination’. See F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 83, 105. I would like to distance myself a bit from this part of his teaching. I am not convinced that a special talent is necessary to get to the ultimate sense of the text. Gadamer adds that for Schleiermacher this ‘transforming oneself into the other’ is given by the share nature of them both – each person bears within himself a speck of the other enabling one to transgress the alienation between the two. Further, he also points out that Schleiermacher also understands the structure of every thought from within the context of the whole of author’s life. H. G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 188–189.

35 She speaks about the faculties of the soul, higher and lower part of the soul or states, for God is in everything

36 ‘[D]enn in ihm ist vieles dieser Art unbewußt was in uns bewußtes werden muß [...]’ F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik*, p. 87; further references to the same topic, see also pp. 50, 53, 83, 108.; Gadamer adds on this point: ‘This understanding can be called “better” insofar as the explicit, thematized understanding of an opinion as opposed to actualizing its contents implies an increased knowledge.’ H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 191.

position of not being subdued to all her sufferings and stress and therefore, being able to explicate all the hidden undertones or perhaps implicitly present ideas.³⁷

The sixth manuscript contains very specific instruction on the process of interpretation. First, it is necessary to establish the socio-historical context of the text to be interpreted.³⁸ Further, it is necessary to follow the basic rule of interpreting the whole from the parts and the parts from the whole. The second basic idea, that of preliminary misunderstanding, is still valid. To be able to apply the former rule, one must first gain a general idea of what the basic structure of the text is. In practice, this means reading it from the beginning to the end. However, if there appears to be a passage which the reader did not understand, it follows that he also misunderstood the whole. Then follows the tedious task of going back and forth, delving into individual chapters or even paragraphs and sentences, to be able to grasp individual meanings and hence also the ultimate sense of the text.³⁹ In this process Schleiermacher in effect describes what would later be called the ‘hermeneutical circle’ but which is rather a ‘hermeneutical spiral’ for the re-reading always brings the interpreter to a higher level or closer to the ultimate meaning (it is not a simple return to the very same spot where one started).⁴⁰

Before explicitly stating what features of the hermeneutics and especially Schleiermacher’s hermeneutic were to this thesis, I would like to mention one more name hugely important for the hermeneutics – Hans Georg Gadamer. Not only is he one of the most prominent personages of recent hermeneutics, but he also represents a source of inspiration for Kevin O’Reilly, whose book on Aquinas’s notion of the will and intellection I use in the second part of the thesis quite a lot. K. O’Reilly’s use of Gadamer’s thought is important, since O’Reilly applies some of Gadamer’s ideas to the study of Aquinas and shows that this approach bears unexpected fruit. He shows that Gadamer transgressed Schleiermacher’s shadow in one important point and that is the role of authority and tradition, especially in constituting ‘hermeneutical consciousness’. If Schleiermacher, much a son of his age, tried to escape from the confines of the Protestant theological tradition and/or approach to the Sacred Scriptures, Gadamer, on the other hand, shows that such an escape is not possible. Truly, Schleiermacher sought such an escape purely on the methodological ground, whereas Gadamer speaks rather about the ‘ontological’ level and refuses to accept the rejection of tradition only because it is a tradition. Further, he shows that all our understanding is necessarily rooted in some kind of tradition, and therefore is not void of at least some prejudices that go hand in hand with it. Further, he also doubts that such ‘prejudices’ are necessarily false and argues that they may be well grounded. He also shows the importance of the tradition being handed on to us and the influence it necessarily has on our own behaviour and attitudes. He simply asserts that we cannot understand another person (or his text) without paying respect to the tradition he was raised up in no matter how distinct from our own tradition it may be.⁴¹

37 To what extent this claim of Schleiermacher’s is or is not relevant and/or valid, I leave to the discernment of the reader. I am not altogether convinced by it, although I suppose that the interpreter might find ways of expressing implicit ideas that the author did not express more explicitly. Yet, I do not see why some kind of silence or omission on the part of the author would necessarily lead to the conclusion that the interpreter understands the meanings and the sense better than the author. Perhaps, the interpreter only has higher language skills.

38 Schleiermacher advises the interpreter to try and establish a very similar relation between himself and the text as was the supposed relation between the text and the original audience. It is similar to a relation between the actor and his character. The aim of this approach is twofold: first, to try and distance one’s self from a personal worldview; the second is a certain independence from other commentaries. That is not to say that those should not be used; they should, for very often the commentaries or interpretations of others open up the text for ourselves but they also in a certain way hinder our own understanding of the original text as to a certain degree they move us to see the text through another person’s lens. See Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 84, 86–87, 159–160.

39 ‘Um das Erste genau zu verstehen muß man schon das Ganze aufgenommen haben.’; ‘Die Bestätigung des Verständnisses welches sich am Anfang ergibt ist vom folgenden zu erwarten. Daraus folgt daß man den Anfang noch haben muß am Ende und dies heißt bei jedem über das gewöhnliche Maaß des Gedächtnisses hinausgehenden complexus daß die Rede muß Schrift werden.’ F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 160–161; for a detailed analysis of possible modes of misunderstanding of the text, see pp. 82–83.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 84–86.

41 H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 272–273, 281.

The reason why I stress this point is two-fold. First, K. O'Reilly builds upon this principle in his own analyses, and second, it sheds a bit of a doubt on several commentaries of Teresa's works which tried to apply too-current prisms to her own works and/or tried to lighten certain remarks of hers (of her unworthiness or respect for the teaching of the Church), which are basically supported only by their conviction that Teresa simply could not have meant it seriously. However, if Gadamer's distinction is applied, then we should be cautious about such conclusions and rather try to understand her through the tradition she inherited. K. O'Reilly comments on this point: 'Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy has profound significance for articulating how the transmission of the Catholic faith throughout the last two millennia has shaped Catholic consciousness.'⁴²

K. O'Reilly catches upon this thread of Gadamer's thought and further argues that

[H]ermeneutics in its ontological construal is concerned with those influences beyond our knowing and willing that enter into and condition the acts of intellect and will and that therefore shape the individual Christian's understanding of reality. These influences obviously belong to the order of grace.⁴³

This is important. Gadamer showed the importance and inalienability of the tradition and its concepts transmitted to the next generation which cannot be simply reduced, ignored or rejected but have to be taken seriously. O'Reilly further stresses that in case of the Christianity, tradition also includes transcendental influence, namely grace. Hence, if interpreting the text produced within Christian tradition (as Teresa's texts undoubtedly are), this transcendental influence likewise must be taken in all sincerity – not diminished, not reduced, not simply rejected and should not be made light of.

In the concept of the hermeneutical circle as applied to Aquinas's works (namely *Summa Theologiae*), O'Reilly sees an opportunity to gain a 'bigger picture', to do a 'macro-level exegesis' that would enable him to see a greater sense behind individual meanings gained on the level of micro exegesis.⁴⁴ Or, in Schleiermacher's terms, to grasp the ultimate sense hidden behind the individual meanings pointing in its direction.

Other aspects, however interesting in themselves, of Gadamer's thought, are not of special interest for this thesis. He is not interested so much in the specific method of interpreting as in the theoretical background thereof. Further, K. O'Reilly points out that Gadamer is too concerned with the 'linguisticity' of man and not so much with human nature.⁴⁵ On the other hand, this present thesis is very much concerned with human nature and not so much with its linguisticity.

Schleiermacher's hermeneutics as a source of inspiration for the present thesis is important in several respects. First, he formulates rules for interpretation that are in themselves as independent of any hermeneutical style bound to a specific religious tradition as is possible. This might seem to be rather lapidary, however, I understand it in a different light. Since his hermeneutical approach is especially focused on the given text, its language, the imagery used, trying to understand the text from within with respect to the context of author's life, times (and Gadamer would add 'tradition'), it gives the interpreter an ideal tool to address it as it is without the need to resort to elsewhere. Also, it requires of the interpreter to put aside his own pre-understanding, categories of thought he is used to, his own world view, and try to see the work from the perspective of the author. Of course, this cannot be done absolutely (no one can step aside from his own times and 'feel into' the old times, it would always be reading the previous ages from the current perspective) but it advises caution against sometimes too hasty and too modern judgements.

42 Kevin O'Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leeuven-Walpole, MA: Thomas Institute Utrecht – Peeters Leuven, 2013), p. 5.

43 Ibid., p. 4.

44 Ibid., pp. 1–3.

45 Ibid., p. 6.

Second, the current academic practice is to document everything by providing the audience with footnotes, pages, direct citations. However salutary such a practice is, Schleiermacher shows that it may not always be easy. Since he discerns between the particular meanings, which can easily be provided with the link, he also recognises the ‘sense of the text’ lying on a deeper level, towards which all the particular meanings point and yet which cannot be made up by a simple summation of them. Such a deeper sense of the text is hard to capture in a single link, or links to several pages. However, it represents the basic thesis that gives the whole its sense, coherence and which, once captured, also enlighten all the particular passages, especially those that were at the beginning incomprehensible.

I find both these points important especially when working with mystical texts, even more so when the texts are those of St Teresa whose style was not exactly systematic, direct and clear. The first point, concentration on the text itself, gives the interpreter a chance to come up with an interpretation that is to a high degree verifiable, since the limits of the interpretation are given by the limits of the text. The second point is important for it helps to transgress our contemporary obsession which recognises only meanings that are explicitly mentioned. However, Teresa desperately struggled to find the right words and expressions, apt comparisons, imagery and symbolic language, always pointing somewhere behind. When the current academic approach is chosen, the interpretation will necessarily be dry and shallow. If on the other hand we apply simple directives of Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics, the whole of Teresa’s works (especially the *Interior Castle*), suddenly becomes ‘alive’; it resembles the ‘world’ in itself, as a globe where the surface meanings point into its centre and a whole new sense emerges.

Therefore, I strongly adhere to these two principles, combined with the third one – the conviction of the original misunderstanding of the given text. The difference is that face-to-face with Teresa’s *Interior Castle* (especially) this original misunderstanding was very clearly present. I could not have pretended that I understood it for I did not. Further, Gadamer’s demand to understand each text from within the tradition it was written in and O’Reilly’s extension of this demand even to the field of transcendence seem to provide an ideal tool in an attempt to understand a mystical text that was written within the Catholic tradition from within the tradition.

1.3.4. TERESIAN RESEARCHERS

First, I would like to sum up three main approaches to the Teresian corpus, highlight a few of the often-cited sources and point out the plusses and minuses of those studies. Further in the text, therefore, the footnotes will be rather sparing, and I will refer to the commentaries only where it is necessary either for a better understanding of Teresa or for the discussion connected to the problem in focus. Otherwise, I will limit the footnotes to the links to Teresa’s own texts, Aquinas’s texts or secondary literature connected to the study of Aquinas.

The majority of the commentaries on the teaching of St Teresa can be divided into four main branches: historical,⁴⁶ theological, literary-linguistical and psychological.⁴⁷ As a rule, the historical works are very good and there are enough of them available. There are so many of them and they go into such details that sometimes the impression remains that every minute of Teresa’s life has been reconstructed and documented. Many of the theological works include extensive historical chapters. For these reasons, I have decided to rely on the already existing works and do not conduct any historical research myself. Further, in this introductory chapter, I do not insert

46 For example, Efrén de la Madre de Dios and Otger Steggink, *Tiempo y vida de Santa Teresa* (Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1968). Elena Carrera, *Teresa of Avila’s Autobiography: Authority, Power and Self in Mid-sixteenth Century Spain* (London: Legenda/Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Pub., 2005). Erika Lorenz, *Nicht alle Nonnen dürfen das: Teresa von Avila und Pater Gracián: die Geschichte die grossen Begegnung* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1987).

47 For example, Erika Lorenz, *Weg in die Weite: die drei Leben der Teresa von Avila* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2003). Allison E. Peers, *Mother of Carmel, a portrait of St. Teresa of Jesus* (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1946) and to a large degree also Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

details from Teresa's own life unless absolutely necessary, but I do provide a brief overview of her times both to help us understand 'why Aquinas' and to help us understand why she had so many troubles with the Inquisition.

The theological works are of a different quality, especially since they range from highly academic⁴⁸ to semi-popular⁴⁹ to popular.⁵⁰ Some of these in an attempt to open Teresa's texts to a general public resort either to psychology (usually the Jungian – my reservations about Jung have been mentioned above)⁵¹ or to literature (the comparison to Franz Kafka's *Schloss* appears more than once).⁵²

In the text above I have mentioned that Teresa seems to have been misunderstood several times just because her texts were read through too modern a prism. Thus, her frequent warnings to place trust in those who are very well learned but lack the personal, spiritual experience are interpreted merely as a kind of rhetoric by Alison Weber.⁵³ This consideration is further repeated by Gillian Ahlgren⁵⁴ and to a certain degree also by Edward Howells.⁵⁵ A. Weber proceeds from personal disbelief in Teresa's self-diminishing proclamations to the extent that she considers it nothing but a cunning rhetoric. In this way she overlooks the traditional teaching on the process of spiritual development as contained in the monastic tradition, especially the role and importance of humility. But she also overlooks Teresa's own stress put on the very same virtue – humility – just as her *Spiritual Testimonies* (general confessions) where her account about inner anxieties are far from rhetoric only.⁵⁶ Weber also does not consider the possibility that any writer and/or orator

48 For example, Edward Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila: Mystical Knowing and Selfhood* (New York: Crossroad Pub., Co., 2002). Mary Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*. Trueman E. W. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love: A Study of the Mysticism of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 1963). Marie-Eugene de l'Enfant-Jesus, *I Want to See God: a Practical Synthesis of Carmelite Spirituality* (Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1953) and *I am the Daughter of the Church: a practical synthesis of Carmelite Spirituality*. (Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1955).

49 Gillian T.W Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005). Rowan Williams, *Teresa of Avila* (Harrisburg, Pa: Morehouse Publisher, 1991), whose book is a very good introduction into the life and work of St Teresa. David Peroutka, *Pramen: vnitřní život podle Terezie z Ávily* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2013). Tomás Álvarez, *Comentarios a las Obras Completas de St. Teresa* (Burgos: Monte Carmelo). I do not provide a year because several editions of Álvarez's commentaries are available. Once they were published in a single volume, however, nowadays a single commentary for a single work of Teresa is available. I have the latter ones.

50 An example of a popular work is Ruth Burrows, *Interior Castle Explored: St. Teresa's Teaching on the Life of Deep Union with God* (London: Burns and Oates, 2007). It is noteworthy that there also are popular books about Teresa that do not fall under the canopy of Christian theology. The author usually proceeds to the texts of St Teresa from some non-Christian point of view, and tries to show the spiritual depth and/or parallels to spiritual practices of different religious traditions. An example is Mirabai Starr who has written/translated several books about/of St Teresa, Cf. Teresa of Avila and Mirabai Starr, *The Interior Castle* (Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2008). Or, Caroline M. Myss, *Entering the Castle: An Inner Path to God and Your Soul* (Waterville, Me: Thorndike Press, 2008).

51 The element of Jungian psychology is paradoxically present among many of the Carmelite commentaries, for example, in the commentaries of Tomás Álvarez, in the popular commentary of Ruth Burrows who was a Carmelite nun and further, for example, in Mary Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, which is a highly scholarly work belonging rather to the field of philosophy/psychology than theology. It should also be noted that T. Álvarez devoted a book *Santa Teresa a contraluz: la santa ante la crítica* (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2004) to a dialogue with critics of St Teresa from the lines of secular psychologists and other scholars trying to interpret mystical phenomena in terms of hysteria and/or psychosis.

52 Note that Teresa's 'castello' would rather be translated as 'Burg' and not 'Schloss'. Moreover, the depression of Kafka's character is mainly due to his inability to enter the manor house despite his great desire to do so, whereas the desire to enter the castle is the necessary, preliminary condition that together with the decision for the spiritual life basically open the diamond castle of the soul as will be shown. Therefore, I am rather sceptical about the use of such comparisons for they seem to bear many more disadvantages than advantages. Cf. Antonio Maria Sicari, *Nel Castello Interiore di Santa Teresa D'Avilla* (Milano: Jaca book, 2006); Tomás Álvarez, *Comentarios al „Castillo Interior“ de Santa Teresa de Jesús* (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2011), pp. 12–14. Álvarez is rather inspired by Kafka's *Metamorphosis* – the comparison is even more peculiar.

53 Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity*.

54 Gillian T.W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

55 Edward Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*.

56 The account of her spiritual life as contained in the *Spiritual Testimonies* should also be weighed against her account about the inner temptations and purely spiritual combat described especially in the sixth dwelling places of the *Interior Castle* where she makes it clear that these inner spiritual fights often take the form of anxieties, feelings of insecurity or spiritual blindness (spiritual night of the spirit, as St John of the Cross would say). This alone sheds suspicious light on Weber's conviction that it only serves as a rhetorical trick.

a. adapts language used to a specific audience, b. submits his work to an editor, or c. is cautious in his choice of words so that he would not rouse unnecessary anger on the part of the reader, be the reader an inquisitor or not.⁵⁷ Thus, although A. Weber provides an interesting analysis and some of her observations are quite interesting, her claims seem too strong and not beyond doubt.⁵⁸

G. Ahlgren in her article⁵⁹ raises an equally bold theory – St Teresa was well aware of her own sanctity by the time of writing her major works. This claim, however, seems to be in contradiction to Teresa's *Spiritual Testimonies*. In these 'general confessions' St Teresa writes without hindrance anything about her strong anxieties and lack of certainty.⁶⁰ Moreover, none of these approaches seem to take the reality of God seriously. Rather, they tend to the assumption that God is only an independent observer, presiding over Heaven and Earth from afar, not really interfering with human affairs. This approach also fails face to face with Teresa's own text: 'All the harm comes from not truly understanding that He is near, but in imagining Him as far away.'⁶¹ However, this is not the only work of G. Ahlgren that I take into consideration, but also her book *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*⁶² and her semi-popular *Entering Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle*.⁶³

The former book provides a lot of useful insights into the historical background of St Teresa, dealing even with the crucial role of Domingo Báñez. Further, she deals with the question of her authority as an 'unlearned' woman within the confines of the contemporary ecclesiastical structures. Ahlgren works quite extensively with the aforementioned study of A. Weber further developing her ideas of a cunning rhetoric strategy used by Teresa to gain her a significant spiritual position. And that is where the problems begin – G. Ahlgren ceases to provide solid arguments and in their stead offers statements and declarations.⁶⁴ Her text reveals that despite her thorough historical inquiry, her background is all too modern, reading into the works of St Teresa the concepts of the gender theory based on several presuppositions, such as all of Teresa's ideas being her own, thus in effect putting aside God and his influence. Second, she a-priori considers Teresa's submission to the authority of the Church as a bad thing done only formally.⁶⁵ Third, Ahlgren is convinced that Teresa actually aimed for recognition as a spiritual teacher, which opposes Teresa's own words re-

57 Such scrutiny has also risen in recent years namely in connection to a risen demand for 'politically correct' speech. In Weber's train of thought the demands such as replacing words like 'man' for 'human being' are nothing but an empty rhetoric.

58 The basic objection is that she does not take the spiritual experience seriously enough, does not ask about the genuineness of humility and overlooks urgent tone of *Spiritual Testimonies*; it diminishes the role of spiritual direction and the gravity with which the authority of the Church has been perceived by individuals at those times, and diminishes Teresa's work as an attempt to promote 'her own' doctrine by the clever use of rhetoric. Alas, such a doctrine extra the ecclesiastical confines would not make any sense and Teresa would not end up as a teacher of the Church but as another pitiable self-misguided character.

59 Gillian Ahlgren, "Negotiating Sanctity: Holy Women in Sixteen-Century Spain", *Church History*, vol. 64, No. 3, 1995, pp. 373–388.

60 Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 1. Moreover, it would stand in contradiction to the notion of 'humility' on which St. Teresa repeatedly puts a stress in all of her writings. Since it's not possible, according to her, to reach the lofty states of spiritual life without humility, and since we know she reached them herself, it follows that she must have been humble and therefore it is incorrect to argue in the opposite, be it from the 'rhetoric' or 'awareness of her own sanctity'.

61 *Camino de Perfección* 29,5.

62 Gillian T.W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*.

63 Gillian T.W. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle*.

64 'For Teresa the tensions were especially acute, for female humility often reinforced patriarchal structures and stereotypes. [...] Rather than attack these strictures outright, Teresa had to appear to be hesitant public figure, willing to serve under obedience but reluctant to attract attention to herself. [...] Teresa's humility underscored her sincerity.' G. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*, p. 69. The whole page is worth reading, especially considering the lack of footnotes indicating that these are the conclusions of the author herself. However, they do not come as a well-balanced conclusion after a meticulous survey but out of the blue. The information she gives is in no way necessarily conclusive in the way she presents them to be.

65 It cannot be further from the truth since on her deathbed, Teresa uttered her last words: 'En fin, Señor, soy hija de la Iglesia.' If for her submission to the authority of the Church was only a formal act, I do not think she would bother to express her obedience with her last breath. Moreover, the account of her last days is more than eloquent – Teresa did much penance for her previous sins and also many acts of contrition. See Efrén de la Madre de Dios – O. Steggink, *Tiempo y Vida de Santa Teresa*, pp. 757–764. For the citation, see p. 761. It is surprising, though, that Ahlgren actually recounts Teresa's last words but seems to ignore them later in the text. G. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*, p. 29.

peated innumerable times throughout her corpus.⁶⁶ Fourth, Ahlgren also as a prolongation of the first point, a-priori dismisses any reference to the possibility of transcendental inspiration and assumes that all of Teresa's works must have been void of any such influence, despite a vast amount of counter evidence. Sadly, Ahlgren's own theory is not convincing.⁶⁷

Ahlgren's latter book follows the layout of the *Interior Castle*, occasionally offering useful insights into individual topics. However, the text is at times confusing, since it seems to put too much stress on feelings and emotions even in the mystical part of the spiritual life. I have recourse to this book in the latter chapters when Ahlgren's insights prove useful for understanding.

I have mentioned these two studies in more detail to illustrate the dangers of unreflected upon rootedness in too modern a worldview that may easily slide into serious mis-interpretation of Teresa and her thought. I could provide a more extended list of other studies that seem problematic. But if I were to do so then this chapter would probably grow in volume so much so that it would finally make up half of the thesis. Therefore, I will refrain from further critique and provide a short summary of two works that I find most useful as a counterpart to the previous two. The rest of the studies relevant for the topic fall somewhere between these two poles and appear in various parts of the thesis and/or in the bibliography, since it is true that I do not find it necessary to quote each of them.⁶⁸

The two studies I appreciate the most are Trueman Dicken's *The Crucible of Love* and Edward Howell's *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*. Both of these studies delve into the works of both personages and bring a lot of useful insights. T. Dicken's approach is rather systematic in the sense that he proceeds according to certain topics. Trueman further shows each topic from the perspective of both St John and St Teresa. Especially, his account of prayer and several mystical phenomena (e.g., the problem of memory in the mystical stage) is stunning, even though I do not agree with his conclusions about the prayer of quiet as will be shown in due course.

E. Howells, on the contrary, makes a study first about John of the Cross and then about St Teresa of Avila. The study about St John is better executed in the sense that he seems to have a deeper understanding of St John than of St Teresa. However, even so, his account about St Teresa's thought is exceptionally deep and I have often found myself to be in accord with his views. There is only one point upon which I disagree with his thesis and that is the strong division he perceives to exist within the soul according to Teresa. I am not convinced this division is there, never mind in such a strong manner. However, I will return to this point at the proper place later in the work. Interestingly, the two works I find most relevant both turn back to Thomistic sources and especially Thomistic psychology.⁶⁹

1.4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: FLOURISHING INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN TROUBLED TIMES

Teresa lived in turbulent times. Shortly before she was born the Catholic Kings (Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile) had reunited the Spanish kingdom and the eight hundred years long Reconquista was over. However, it did not take long before some Jews who involuntarily converted to Christianity reconverted to the traditions of their ancestors. It started with the renewed observance of the Jewish feasts but continued with the deliberate violation of the Commandments

66 Ahlgren also forgets that when Teresa was commanded to be under house arrest, it brought her genuine relief, saying: 'Never have I received a sweeter command.'

67 Cf. G. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*, pp. 76–80.

68 To make this thesis more manageable, and while a thorough study of the texts has been part of this research, I have limited the footnotes to the necessary minimum and refer the reader who seeks more detail to the bibliography where all the literature studied is provided.

69 I have not found any way to specify this Thomistic grounding more specifically. Surely, there exist three main branches of Thomism and a long and flourishing tradition of interpreting Aquinas, however, there is no clue as to discerning which source of inspiration served these two scholars. Since they mostly pay attention to the basics of Thomistic teaching about the soul (inner sense including), it seems enough to suppose that they have not overstepped Aquinas's teaching in this respect. At least, I have not marked any direct reference to any later commentator of Aquinas, even though the works on Aquinas dealing with the topic of the spiritual life and/or contemplation often refer to John of St Thomas.

of the Church, including the fast, sacraments, liturgical observance and abuse of sacred objects or paying disrespect to the Virgin Mary and the Saints. The Catholic kings decided to act and established the notorious Spanish Inquisition in 1478. At first, it focused on those *conversos* (both from the rank of former Jews and former Muslims), whose sincere acceptance of the new faith was dubious or superficial. Even though the Inquisition acted with the Jews and Muslims ruthlessly for most of the time, there were ecclesiastics who thought persuasion and education to be the better tool of conversion. They wished to achieve their goal by the use of the printing press, with the composition of new manuals and catechisms.⁷⁰

One of the most notable figures of this new current was Card. Cisneros. He became the confessor to the Queen and shortly after also the archbishop of Toledo. He founded the Complutensian University and encouraged the publication of the polyglot Bible and translation of the New Testament into vernacular. Besides, he also encouraged translations of works about spiritual life into Spanish. These were being dispersed far and wide among all the layers of society and indeed started a longed-for revival of the spiritual life. Teresa herself owed an introduction to mental prayer to this very reform.⁷¹ He was also involved in the reform of the religious orders which was closely related to the flowering of Spanish mysticism.⁷²

Beside the positive effects, the Cisneros reform had, however, also a not so much desirable by-product. There appeared a lot of lay spiritual movements which more or less departed from Catholic orthodoxy. These spiritual currents were watered from several founts. First, there were treatises on the spiritual life and three stages of spiritual life made available in the vernacular. Second, a certain popular dislike of the *letrados*, those learned theologians, became to take dominance among more and more believers both from the ranks of laity and those within the conventual life.⁷³ Mysticism became to be seen as the ideal theology. Card. Cisneros was himself very favourable towards mysticism and therefore there were many books on this topic in circulation.⁷⁴ Even though the first translations emerged, they were still relatively few in number compared to the number of books available in Latin. One of the most favourite ones from the latter group was Gerson's *Mystica Theologia*, which praised the devoted 'unlearned simpletons' over the *letrados soberbios*, the proud scholars.⁷⁵ Hamilton comments on it aptly: 'The praise of ignorance they [the books on mysticism] contained was reserved for the learned who could read them in Latin.'⁷⁶ Further, it was the practice of *recogimiento* (recollection) which was recommended, for example, by Francisco de Osuna in his *Tercer abecedario spiritual*. This is a special meditative exercise aimed at the recollection of senses and reaching a higher level of prayer.⁷⁷

This practice gave rise to the *alumbrados*, the spiritually illuminated ones.⁷⁸ It is noteworthy

70 Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in the Sixteenth Century Spain: The Alumbrados* (Cambridge: James Clarke and co., Ltd., 1992), pp. 7–9.

71 Card. Cisneros became the archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain in 1495. He personally ordered other translations: St John Climacus's Ladder of Divine Ascent, the works of Catherine of Siena and Angela of Foligno, Pseudo-Dionysios's Mystical Theology. He himself was very favourably inclined to mysticism, prophecy, etc. See Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 13–19; G. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*, pp. 2, 9–10; E. Carrera, *Teresa of Avila's Autobiography*, pp. 28–29;

72 Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 10–13, 19–20. An extensive anthology on Spanish Mysticism in the Golden Age, see Mecquiades Andrés, *Los místicos de la Edad de Oro en España y America* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1996).

73 It should be noted that Teresa, however, was on the other hand complaining about the learned theologians without actual experience, but was also complaining about the unlearned confessors warning her daughters against them. Thus, her ideal was an educated theologian practically living his faith, practising prayer and developing his spiritual life. In short, with education and experience.

74 Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 10–23.

75 *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

77 Hamilton provides quite a decent description of this practice, see *ibid.*, pp. 14–16. T. Dicken informs about the practice of recollection in Teresa's works, see T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, pp. 107–108.

78 The inquisitional decretal from 1524 states: 'Entre muchas personas, se decian, conferian y publicaban algunas palabras que parecían desviarse de nuestra santa madre Iglesia, e se juntaban e facían conventículos particulares [...] e algunos se decían alumbrados, dejados o perfectos.' Cit. in M. Andrés, *Los místicos de la Edad de Oro*, p. 77.

that this is a somewhat inclusive term for several groups which differed to a certain degree among themselves. The term itself was widely used in a rather pejorative way and often served as a useful tool for denouncement to the Inquisition, not always for honest reasons.⁷⁹ Its origins can be traced to the Isabel de la Cruz, a *beata* and Franciscan tertiary and her companion Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz,⁸⁰ an accountant to several noble men. The group around them is known as the ‘*alumbrados of Toledo*’ (early 16th century). There are two other branches – the ‘*alumbrados of Llerena*’ (late 16th century) and the ‘*alumbrados of Seville*’ (early 17th century). These three groups differ not only in the time and place of their operation, but also in their teachings. If the *alumbrados* of Toledo were relatively mild in their practices, the same does not count for the other two groups which were prone even to sexual excesses.⁸¹

Among the positive and relatively unsuspecting points of their teaching were their focus on the three stages of the spiritual life, emphasis on the experience, the quest for permanent prayer and the insistence on the love of God. Less positive were then the teaching on the superiority of the actions performed out of self-less love of God over the fasts and penances.⁸² The points of their teaching found to be beyond the ranks of orthodoxy were the scepticism about ecstasies and trances,⁸³ pessimism about the human nature and ritual gestures in many respects resembling that of Luther, belief that the elect were beyond the reach of sin and were free of all obligations. Further, they were determined to read the Scriptures and saw themselves to be able to pronounce the correct interpretation thereof based on their being ‘illuminated’ by the Holy Spirit. They criticised the worship of images, the cult of the saints and the purchase of indulgences.⁸⁴ Beside the problems with the *conversos* returning to their former beliefs and the *alumbrados*, there was also the ‘thread’ of Erasmian humanism and Luther’s reformation.

Teresa entered into this hubbub and wrote that prayer is like water, like the flight of a butterfly, like a sudden storm, like a fire, prayer is like a breeze which brings an utter peace, peace, which the world cannot give.⁸⁵ She, a woman, dared to write about prayer. What was more, she even dared to promote interior prayer. This interior prayer, however, alarmingly resembled the prayer of the suppressed *alumbrados*.⁸⁶ The mystical states which she described in her works evoked the scan-

79 Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 1–5.

80 Besides A. Hamilton’s books, there is a short biography about this person in M. Andrés, *Los místicos de la Edad de Oro*, pp. 78–79.

81 *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 126.

82 Even though this point was still perceived to be within the rank of the orthodoxy, since it could also be found, for example, in the orthodox work by Alonso de Madrid, *Arte para servir a Dios*. *Ibid.*, p.39.

83 Note that the latter *alumbrado* groups on the contrary supported the extravagant supposedly mystical behaviour, see *ibid.*, p.119.

84 *Ibid.*, pp. 39–42.; M. Andrés adds: ‘Que ha tenido por opinion que los sentidos exteriores no era necesario refrenarlos, sino el apitito interior. E que universalmente tenían por opinion que era imperfección tener respeto a refrenar los actos e sentidos exteriores, e que no había necesidad de ellos sino de los actos e sentidos interiores, e que refrenar los exteriores sin los interiores que no alcanzaria su perfección. E dice su culpa, que iba perdiendo poco a poco la devoción de los santos e de las imágenes de la Iglesia e otras cosas semejantes, teniendo que era cosa baja e rastrera.’ M. Andrés, *Los místicos de la Edad de Oro*, pp. 77–78.

85 Prayer like water, cf. M 5,11,7; 18 (esp. 18,9); M 4,2,2–9; CV 19,5. Prayer like the flight of the butterfly, cf. V 18,9 (in fact, she speaks at this point rather about a small bird but the image strongly evokes the passages about the little white butterfly in M; also, at the beginning of the fifth dwelling places she actually speaks about a ‘little bird’ or ‘butterfly’, but chooses to elaborate the latter symbol); M 5,2,2; 5,2,7–8. Prayer like a storm, cf. M 4,1,10 (Teresa does not use the word ‘storm’ but her description of the state she finds herself in strongly resembles a storm), M 6. Prayer like a fire, cf. CV 19,3–5 (she speaks about the fire of love towards God fomented in the heart). Prayer like a gentle breeze, cf. M 7,2,6; 7,3,9; 7,3,13; cf. 1 Kings 19:11–12.

86 Due to the widespread lay spiritual movements which attracted women in a larger scale than men, Spaniards began to use a not so favourable expression ‘*mujercillas*’ (little women) to denote the (lay) women daring to aspire for spiritual perfection and/or inner prayer. Teresa herself uses this expression repeatedly, usually when talking about herself. Melchor Cano was an especially fervent opponent of the ‘*mujercillas*’, writing: ‘Por más que las mujeres reclamen este fruto (de la oración), es menester vedarlo y poner cuchillo e fuego para que el pueblo no llegué a él.’, cit. in Martínez, García e la Concha and Gonzales de Cardedal (eds.), *Congreso Internacional Teresiano*, vol.1 (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1983, 137–167), p.153. There is plentiful and interesting conversation about the ‘*mujercillas*’ and also about general attitude towards women, their social status and the usual connotations of womanhood. See, G. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*; Gillian Ahlgren, *Negotiating Sanctity*, pp. 373–388; Stephen Haliczzer, *Between Exaltation and Infamy: Female Mystics in the Golden Age Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. pp.48–79; A. Weber,

dal of Magdalena de la Cruz.⁸⁷ The reform she started was an unheard of action and suspiciously enough, her *Life* was denounced to the Inquisition.⁸⁸

Yet, write she did, and her works were an intensive inner experience, deeply rooted in her prayer life, full of spiritual counsels, cautions and practical advice given both to her sisters and to the mother superiors of the newly reformed cloisters,⁸⁹ which can hardly be considered systematic or philosophical in their nature. Yet, they do not emerge out of blue – St Teresa was as much a daughter of her age as anyone else. Her first book, the *Life*, was held by the Inquisition for ten years,⁹⁰ she herself faced the accusation from *alumbradismo*,⁹¹ and various of the theologians (her contemporaries) were and remained her adversaries.⁹² Yet, there were others who gave her their support and she managed to gain their trust. They came mainly from the Dominican order and the newly founded Jesuits.⁹³

The invention of the printing press, however, did not affect only the disseminating of vernacular treatises and translations but firstly and foremostly the university world enabling a much quicker exchange of ideas not only across Europe but also across the ocean, with Latin America. Thus, already in Teresa's time but even in the century to come, the universities became a world blooming with ideas of various modes of diversity. Some of the scholars were quite conservative, like Domingo Báñez, who was known to be one of the most faithful commentators on Aquinas, while

Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity, pp. 17–41.

- 87 Magdalena de la Cruz was a nun and later also a prioress of the convent of the Poor Clares 'Santa Isabel de los Ángeles' in Cordoba. For a long time, she enjoyed the fame of a saint and mystic of many spiritual gifts and an austere life. Many aristocrats were devoted to her, including the Queen herself who used her habit as a means of protection against the devil and wrapped her new-born son Philip II in it. Magdalena even enjoyed the favour and protection of the Inquisitor General Manrique. St. John of the Cross and Ignatius of Loyola were two of the few personages who did not believe in the verity of her 'mysticism'. In 1543 she confessed she had entered into a pact with the devil and had been possessed by him for most of her life. The sources give different information concerning the age at which her possession began. Ahlgren says it happened at the age of 12, Weber says she was 6, Carrera says she was 5. Cf. G. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*, pp. 21–22. E. Carrera, *Teresa of Avila's Autobiography*, pp. 107–108. A. Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity*, pp. 45–46. Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 115–116.
- 88 It was denounced to the Inquisition by the princess of Eboli in April/May 1574. Álvarez, Tomás (ed.), *Diccionario de Santa Teresa: Doctrina e Historia*, 2ª edición (Burgos: Monte Carmelo), p. 592.; The book remained in the hands of the Inquisition even after Teresa's death in 1582, was finally released in 1587 and published in 1588. Both Teresa herself and her *Life* were under the suspicion of the Inquisition. Although she feared she could have been misled by the evil one, she herself felt to be an obedient daughter of the Church, so she never really feared the Inquisition. Cf. Tomás Álvarez, *St. Teresa of Avila, 100 Themes on Her Life and Work* (Washington: ICS Publications, 2011), pp. 37–40. This is further well illustrated by this quote: 'Representative of the Inquisition, Alvaro de Quiñonens, visited Teresa anonymously to warn her to remember Magdalena de la Cruz, "whom the people had taken for a saint, whereas the devil had her completely under his control." With no slightest change of expression Teresa replied very humbly, "I never remember her without trembling."'
- 89 Elena Carrera is convinced that St Teresa intentionally inserted into her works advice for other/future mother superiors and/or sisters concerning more practical matters (running the cloister on a low budget, disobedient sisters, etc.) for she would not have been allowed to write a separate treatise on these matters. So, in Carrera's opinion, Teresa cunningly made a use of rather general direction 'to write a treatise about spiritual life for her sisters' to the maximum. E. Carrera, *Teresa of Avila's Autobiography*, p. 163. Alison Weber in the conclusion cites Fray Alonso showing that not everyone was fooled. 'The author of this book [Teresa of Jesús] writes a long history of her life and conversation and virtues, using the trivial excuse that she was ordered to do so by her confessors.' A. Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity*, p. 161.
- 90 Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 1, trans. Kavanaugh, Kieran and Rodriguez, Otilio, (Washington: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976), p. 27. The *Introduction* makes it clear it was the Princess of Eboli who denounced the manuscript to the Inquisition. Afterwards, Fr. Domingo Báñez became its censor. He used to be a confessor of St. Teresa. According to his own testimony, however, he remained in close contact with St Teresa for the rest of her life, giving her counsel both in spiritual and worldly matters. Silverio de Santa Teresa (ed.), *Procesos de Beatificación y Canonización de Sta. Teresa de Jesús*, Tomo I (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 1935), 6–11. Interestingly, Allison Peers was convinced it was D. Báñez himself who took the manuscript to the Inquisition. Alison E Peers, *Mother of Carmel*, p. 41. His assumption seems to be in the light of recent research untenable. Tomás Álvarez is convinced that D. Báñez secured St. Teresa's work by declaring it to be suitable for the 'adult Christians', i.e. the inquisitors themselves. Tomás Álvarez, *Comentarios al 'Libro de la Vida' de Santa Teresa de Jesús* (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2009), p. 17.
- 91 E. Llamas-Martínez, Teresa de Jesús y los Alumbrados: Hacia una revisión del 'alumbradismo' español del siglo XVI, in Martínez, Concha, Cardedal, *Congreso Internacional Teresiano*, pp. 137–167; for a comprehensive study of 'alumbradismo', see A. Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in the Sixteenth Century Spain*.
- 92 Among them also was the famous Melchior Cano. See, E. Llamas-Martínez, Teresa de Jesús y los Alumbrados, p. 153; Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 14. Carrera, Elena. *Teresa of Avila's Autobiography*, p. 79–86.
- 93 Cf. Paulino Álvarez, *Santa Teresa y el P. Báñez* (Madrid, 1882); Felipe Martín, *Santa Teresa de Jesús y la orden de predicadores* (Ávila, 1909).

other were somewhat more adventurous, diverging themselves from their master, such as Francisco Suárez. Yet, Aquinas still remained the point of reference no matter whether they agreed or disagreed with him or to what extent they (dis)agreed with him.⁹⁴

However, it is important to realise that at that time the universities were open only for men and usually only for ecclesiastics – even a layman at university was an exception. Thus, the university world within its confines enjoyed as much independence and academic freedom as is imaginable but this freedom of thought did not overflow to the world beyond, which was suppressed under the scrutiny of the Inquisition, counter-reformation tendencies, the effort to handle the *alumbrados* and bring the uncontrollably flourishing popular spirituality under some control in order not to let the people go astray and risk damnation. For damnation – the stakes were too high – life or death forever. In a world imbued with Christianity as sixteenth century Spain was, life eternal as the final goal of man’s striving was behind all these efforts.

The question is, why is this important? The answer is simple – it directs us back to Aquinas. When the thought first came that I could perhaps understand Teresa better if I tried to read her works through the lens of the scholastic philosophy/psychology, I thought that Domingo Báñez might give me the key to her thought. But once I started to study his texts I shortly realised that Teresa’s ideas were much more basic. Surely, she was undoubtedly influenced by Báñez – that is clear both from her own works and from his testimony. However, I could not see his ideas in hers.

Then I realised that the relations between the universities and the world beyond (specifically with the laity) were much less intense than one would judge according to our present experience and that there even were strong tendencies to prevent the laity from those ideas discussed within the university. Besides, the laity was discouraged from any higher spiritual aspirations. Therefore, it would be most unlikely that any woman, especially such a suspicious woman as Teresa, would have been presented with new philosophical or theological ideas. It was more likely that she was given the solid food of traditional teaching leaning against the shoulders of the spiritual giants of the past. But who, then? The vocabulary she used was clearly scholastically inspired – Aquinas perhaps? Domingo Báñez was one of his most faithful commentators after all.

Besides, K. O’Reilly also remarks that the chief inspiration of this book came through the John of the Cross, who rooted his account of the spiritual life on the first sixth question of *Prima Secundae* of Aquinas. He especially emphasises:

Essentially, the teaching of both St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross concerning the journey of the soul towards union with God – achieved in the beatific vision in the next life and by faith and love in this life – is the same.⁹⁵

Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, Jacques Maritain, Augustin Francois Poulain and Joseph Maréchal to name at least some tried to understand either Teresa of Avila or John of the Cross through Aquinas’s thought. Besides, B. Lonergan found inspiration in Aquinas as well and his work was a chief inspiration for M. Frohlich’s book on the intersubjectivity in Teresa. T. Dicken returned back to Aquinas, just as Edward Howells did. Therefore, it seems that there have been at least some scholars who placed the great Spanish mystics in relation with Aquinas. John of the Cross was treated through this prism more extensively than Teresa, though. Those who tried to grasp Teresa’s teaching through Aquinas’s thought usually limit themselves to the basic psychological categories creating a background for Teresa’s notions.

⁹⁴ It is true that F. Suárez was slightly younger than St. Teresa but D. Novotný has shown very convincingly the special character of Spanish scholasticism both in the Renaissance and Baroque era, depicting the differences in character between both philosophical currents on the one hand, and on the other showing beyond doubt that the latter organically grew out of the former. What is more, he also shows that the special feature of the ‘renaissance’ scholasticism (the era of St. Teresa) saw its strong inspiration in Aquinas’s teaching, which became weaker in the century to come. Daniel D. Novotný, *Ens Rationis from Suárez to Caramuel: A Study in Scholasticism of the Baroque Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 1–22. He also discusses the widespread character of academic scholastic discussions reaching from Europe to Latin America to Asia.

⁹⁵ K. O’Reilly, *Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing*, p. 17.

My own thesis goes beyond these efforts. I try to show that not only Teresa's notion of the soul is coherent with Aquinas's as far as the powers of the soul are concerned, but also his teaching on the final end, beatitude, contemplation, the interwoven character of the will and the intellect, his notion of intellection and the ideas about the possibility of the mystical knowledge and marriage are implicitly present in Teresa's works and thus, in turn, if her works are read through his teaching on these matters, Teresa's ideas become clearer, simpler, easily understandable. It is as if Aquinas's teaching opens up the way to hers.

To decide to what extent this attempt has been successful is up to each reader. However, I hope I have shown convincingly that to make the attempt to read Teresa through Aquinas is worth trying.

2. St Teresa on Soul

Although I am going to work with the full scope of Teresa's works and especially the four 'large' treatises on the spiritual life, that is, the *Life*, the *Way of Perfection*, *Meditations on the Song of Songs* and the *Interior Castle*, I will rely heavily on the *Interior Castle*. There are several reasons for this approach. First, it is the masterpiece which contains the fullness of Teresa's teaching both on the soul and the interior life. Second, its basic symbol is very understandable and provides a good structure to her teaching and thus both the author and the reader may use it as a useful guide through the regions of the inner life. And third, the symbol of the castle will help the reader orient himself in the topics which will be treated further. For all these reasons, this chapter deals with the *Interior Castle* almost exclusively, although at the end a comparison with the other three major works is provided. However, in subsequent chapters the topics will be treated across Teresa's works.

2.1. THE SYMBOL OF THE CASTLE

A castle made from diamond or crystal is a symbol for the human soul. This castle according to St. Teresa's descriptions is of many rooms and chambers, which are organised as if in seven circuits, hence the numbering of the seven dwelling places.¹ Except the castle itself, there is a courtyard surrounding it. When one enters in, the route goes ever more inward and finds its end in the innermost chamber where the King of Kings (the Triune God) dwells. G. Ahlgren speaks about 'seven concentric spheres, gradually leading into a single chamber, the depth of the soul where God dwells',² while E. Münzebrock explains them as seven concentric rings around the centre.³

However, the plan of this castle is not as straightforward as it may seem. St Teresa makes it somewhat more complicated at the very beginning of this work. The chambers in each of the circuits are not organised in any plain manner, one after the other. Rather, they are all around the one entering them – above, under, on both sides, in front and behind. Thus, the journey through this castle cannot be understood as a mere journey from one point to another.⁴

Further, Teresa makes a simile of God dwelling in the last chamber being like the Sun shining or not shining through the castle. The Sun, God, is always there and his light is constantly shed therefrom. The problem is that the person himself may not be aware both of the indwelling God and of his protruding light. This happens when the soul is obscured by personal sin. St Teresa uses the symbol of the castle being covered with a black, non-transparent cloth.⁵ This means the Sun and its light never really disappear from the castle. M. Frohlich understands this to form a 'metaphysical and theological notion of God as constituting the inmost center of the soul'.⁶ The problem is that such an idea reduces the 'real presence' to a mere notion, albeit St Teresa does not doubt the reality of the divine indwelling as will be increasingly obvious throughout the work.

Teresa is fully aware of the problems arising from the use of this symbol, yet she cannot find any more fitting expression.

1 M 1,1,1; 1,1,3; 2,1,8.

2 G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle*, p. 22.

3 E. Münzebrock, *Teresa von Avila: Meister der Spiritualität* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004), p. 106.

4 Cf. M 1,1.

5 M 1,2,3.

6 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 181.

Well getting back to our beautiful and delightful castle we must see how we can enter it. It seems I'm saying something foolish. For if this castle is the soul, clearly one doesn't have to enter it since it is within oneself. How foolish it would seem were we to tell someone to enter a room he is already in.

But you must understand that there is a great difference in the ways one may be inside the castle. For there are many souls who are in the outer courtyard – which is where the guards stay – and don't care at all about entering the castle, *nor do they know* what lies within that most precious place, nor who is within, nor even how many rooms it has.⁷

Several important points can be derived from the very beginning of the *Interior Castle*, thus showing the scope of problems that are to be dealt with. The first one is that when she compares the soul to the interior castle, her claim should be taken seriously for she makes an attempt to articulate a 'theological anthropology' as M. Frohlich would say. M. Frohlich also thinks that Teresa's attempt is more engaging than the scholastic anthropology even though she admits that Teresa's vocabulary follows the scholastic one to a certain degree.⁸ I hope to show throughout this work that the similes between Teresa's teaching and the scholastic one in general and Aquinas in particular go beyond the mere use of the vocabulary. This, however, leads to a 'view of the structure of the human soul which differs radically from our modern one', as T. Dicken warns.⁹

If the previous suggestion is taken seriously, then the symbol of the castle of seven circuits 'of the soul' should be treated equally seriously. This means that St. Teresa by using this symbol hints that the *soul itself* is a compound of 'seven layers'. G. Ahlgren does not speak about 'layers' but understands the spiritual journey as a movement through the 'spaces of the psyche'. She understands this movement only in terms of knowledge – both of one's self and of God.¹⁰ Even though the question of knowledge is super-important, Teresa's symbol is not thereby exhausted. Symbols, unlike signs, are often multi-faceted, which means that one and the same symbol/symbolic expression refers to various realities, entities and/or objects. Teresa's symbol of the interior castle is no exception and thus it refers both to the essence of the soul, which may be said to form a 'static element' of the symbol, and the acts of the soul, which might be referred to as the 'dynamic element' of the symbol.

Thus the static element of the symbol of the castle refers to the 'structure' of the soul, whereas the dynamic element refers to 'activity of the soul', which express themselves both as acts of the individual powers of the soul but also as the activity of the soul as a whole of which it is possible to speak as about the 'spiritual journey'. In other words, the description of the dynamism of spiritual life reach its apex in the 'mystical marriage' of the last chamber. M. Frohlich further adds: 'Teresa's metaphor of the interior castle [...] is an expression of the opposite of reification – namely, the dynamism of the flow of life and love in the heart of existence where human beings truly "dwell".'¹¹

To bring in some system and clarity, I suggest treating first the question of the essence of the soul and its relation to the human body while showing in what manner the soul transcends the body. This also includes the question of whether there is something in the human soul that has nothing to do with the human body, that is, is totally incorporeal and which could be denoted as the 'superior part' of the soul mentioned by Teresa. Second, I would proceed by describing the structure of the soul in its static dimension.

7 'Pues tornando a nuestro hermoso y deleitoso castillo, hemos de ver cómo podremos entrar en él. Parece que digo algún disparate; porque si este castillo es el ánima claro está que no hay para qué entrar, pues se es él mismo; como parecería desatino decir a uno que entrase en una pieza estando ya dentro. - Mas habéis de entender que va mucho de estar a estar; que hay muchas almas que se están en la ronda del castillo que es adonde están los que le guardan, y que no se les da nada de entrar dentro ni saben qué hay en aquel tan precioso lugar ni quién está dentro ni aun qué piezas tiene.' M 1,1,5 [emphasis mine].

8 M. Frohlich. *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p.175.

9 T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, p. 327.

10 G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle*, p. 22–23.

11 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, pp. 189–190.

2.2. SOUL AND BODY

In the opening chapters of the *Interior Castle*, Teresa uses not only the symbol of the castle itself but also the symbol of the outer walls and courtyards surrounding it.

It is a shame and unfortunate that through our own fault we don't understand ourselves or know who we are. Wouldn't it show great ignorance, my daughters, if someone when asked who he was didn't know, and didn't know his father or mother or from what country he came? Well now, if this would be so extremely stupid, we are incomparably more so when we do not strive to know who we are, but limit ourselves to considering only roughly these bodies. Because we have heard and because faith tells us so, we know we have souls. But we seldom consider the precious things that can be found in this soul, or who dwells within it, or its high value. Consequently, little effort is made to preserve its beauty. All our attention is taken up with the plainness of the diamond's setting or the outer wall of the castle; that is, with these bodies of ours.¹²

This citation makes it clear that the castle is not without an outer wall and courtyards as well as there are no courtyards and outer walls without the castle in the middle. Further, she clearly indicates that the walls and the courtyards are symbols for the body and the 'bodily sphere' of human existence. She also deems it possible for a man to live completely outside the castle, yet within its walls.

What is inseparable in symbol is also inseparable in reality, namely, the body (outer walls and courtyards) and soul (the castle). In the perspective of the previous paragraph, it becomes clear that, according to St. Teresa, man can live a completely carnal existence, without ever entering inward, to his own soul. To enter inwards is then possible when one starts a life of prayer.

Some more popular authors come up with the idea that St Teresa speaks about the soul as about something that only gradually comes into existence, that is, something not fully there at the beginning. This notion does not seem to be in an accord with her own texts, specifically due to her enormous effort to explain that the castle, into which one enters, is the soul which is already there and so it might seem foolish to wish to enter it. E. Howells, on the contrary, speaks about the 'expansion' of the soul during the process of mystical transformation.¹³ Although this is in a way a fitting expression, the manner of such an expansion needs to be explained. As Teresa makes it clear the soul in its fulness is connected to the human body from the very beginning of the human existence, although man may not be aware of it, the 'expansion' of the soul cannot be understood in such a way that the soul itself would 'grow'. However, it also cannot be said that the fulness of its potential is used or exhausted from the very beginning of the human life, otherwise there would not be any possibility of spiritual growth, no spiritual development, and the 'journey' would not make any sense. Neither of these positions is that of St Teresa, as is shown in this citation.

I don't find anything comparable to the magnificent beauty of a soul and its marvelous capacity. Indeed, our intellects, however keen, can hardly comprehend it, just as they cannot comprehend God. [...] It is a shame and unfortunate that through our own fault we *don't understand* ourselves or know who we are. [...] It should be kept in mind here that the fount, the *shining sun* [i.e., God] that is in the center of the soul, does not lose its beauty and splendor; it is *always present in the soul*, and nothing can take away its loveliness. But if a black cloth is placed over a crystal that is in the sun, obviously the sun's brilliance will have no effect on the crystal even though the sun is shining on it. [...] The things of the soul must always be

12 'No es pequeña lástima y confusión que, por nuestra culpa, no entendamos a nosotros mismos ni sepamos quién somos. ¿No sería gran ignorancia, hijas mías, que preguntasen a uno quién es, y no se conociese ni supiese quién fue su padre ni su madre ni de qué tierra? Pues si esto sería gran bestialidad, sin comparación es mayor la que hay en nosotras cuando no procuramos saber qué cosa somos, sino que nos detenemos en estos cuerpos, y así a bulto, porque lo hemos oído y porque nos lo dice la fe, sabemos que tenemos almas. Mas qué bienes puede haber en esta alma o quién está dentro en esta alma o el gran valor de ella, pocas veces lo consideramos; y así se tiene en tan poco procurar con todo cuidado conservar su hermosura: todo se nos va en la grosería del engaste o cerca de este castillo, que son estos cuerpos.' M 1,1,2.

13 E. Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, pp. 103–105, 112, 124.

considered as plentiful, spacious, and large; to do so is not an exaggeration. The soul is capable of much more than we can imagine, and the sun that is in this royal chamber shines in all parts.¹⁴

G. Ahlgren depends in her understanding on slightly different vocabulary. However, it seems she aims at a similar conclusion. She does not speak about the ‘expansion’ of the soul but rather of the ‘activation’ of the divine life within the depth of the soul. Without ‘our going through the castle’, God cannot be active in our own soul but remains ‘only’ a passive guest.¹⁵

St Teresa takes the full existence of the soul from the very beginning of man’s existence for granted and tries to describe by the symbolic ‘journey through the seven circuits of the dwelling places’, all of which are present all the time. Thus, the ‘expansion’ does not denote any kind of ‘growth’. Yet, there obviously is some change. Therefore, I suggest understanding this ‘expansion’ of the soul in terms of potentiality and actuality; to understand the spiritual development as gradual actualisation of the soul’s originally only potential capacity reaching its full actuality in the final union between the soul and God. Moreover, in the opening chapters, she also speaks about the immense value of the soul given by the indwelling of the Divine guest and the symbol of the black cloth covering the Sun (God) shining from within. All of these symbols try to explain the reality of human soul independent of the knowledge of the subject thereof.

Using St Teresa’s symbolism, it would be more fitting *not* to visualise the spiritual journey solely in terms of spatial movement, for the soul is not a ‘place’, even though M. Frohlich sees a spatial quality in Teresa’s metaphor.¹⁶ It is true, that Teresa does not explain and/or provide any argument therefore but it seems clear that she does not think about the soul as something ‘material’. Especially in the latter dwelling places there may be found many expressions indicating that the spiritual states do not have anything in common with the body.¹⁷ Although it pertains usually to prayer, experiences or ‘spiritual delights’ (more on them later), it is clear that should the soul be something material it would not have the capacity to perceive that which is immaterial.¹⁸ Moreover, if the soul was only something material it would not have the capacity to be united with God, who is immaterial. Then it would follow that the mystical union of the soul and God would not be possible and both the ‘spiritual journey’ and *Interior Castle* would lose any point and deny Teresa’s experience.¹⁹ Therefore, for Teresa the soul is immaterial and as such it is without spatial dimensions. In this specific respect, the symbol of the castle fails the reader rather than helps him. For to imagine the journey as a journey where there is something ahead to be reached and something left behind is misleading. It would be more fitting to imagine the ‘spiritual journey through the castle’ as opening the doors separating individual dwelling places or – to use perhaps an even more vivid

14 ‘No hallo yo cosa con que comparar la gran hermosura de un alma y la gran capacidad; y verdaderamente apenas deben llegar nuestros entendimientos, por agudos que fuesen, a comprenderla, no pueden llegar a considerar a Dios. [...] No es pequeña lástima y confusión que, por nuestra culpa, no entendamos a nosotros mismos ni sepamos quién somos. [...] Es de considerar aquí que la fuente y aquel sol resplandeciente que está en el centro del alma no pierde su resplandor y hermosura que siempre está dentro de ella, y cosa no puede quitar su hermosura. Mas si sobre un cristal que está al sol se pusiese un paño muy negro, claro está que, aunque el sol dé en él, no hará su claridad operación en el cristal. [...] Porque las cosas del alma siempre se han de considerar con plenitud y anchura y grandeza, pues no le levantan nada, que capaz es de mucho más que podremos considerar, y a todas partes de ella se comunica este sol que está en este palacio.’ M 1,1,1–2; 1,2,3; 1,2,8.

15 Even though G. Ahlgren explains that the purpose of the spiritual journey according to Teresa is to be renewed in the image and likeness of God, her explanation further on shows that her own understanding is rather shallow and tends to restrict both the richness of Teresa’s symbolic language and the depth of her experience to mere psychological self-knowledge. This shows especially in the constant stress put on the ‘selfhood’ of human person. Teresa on the contrary gradually diverge the focus on God rather than on the ‘selfhood’. G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle*, pp. 21–24. Note that the ‘selfhood’ is a constant topic of the whole book – no specific pagination is, therefore, given for this notion.

16 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 189. However, it is fair to say she also understands the dynamism of the spiritual journey as orienting the soul’s spiritual longing towards the centre, where God dwells. *Ibid.*

17 For example: M 3,2,8; 4,1,8; 5,1,4; 6,4,13; 6,5, 7–8.

18 Especially the sixth dwelling places show this quite clearly.

19 And not only hers but the experiences of the long line of Christian mystics reaching from the first centuries of the Church up to our own times.

image – as destroying the separating walls between the previous and the next circuit of chambers thus making the inner space united, *'plentiful, spacious and large'*, actualised. That is why we should not imagine that in 'reaching' new dwelling places we are leaving the previous ones.

On the other hand, the text of the *Interior Castle* does not suggest any radical division between the soul and body. On the contrary, the connection to the body is made clear in the first dwelling places and symbolised by the outer walls and courtyards as has been shown. Although this alone would not constitute a permanent connection between the soul and the body, Teresa pays attention to the body even in the subsequent dwelling places. This is shown in her remarks concerning sensual apprehension (even though these could be temporarily suspended during some of the mystical phenomena) in her treatment of the powers of the soul closely connected to the body and also in the fourth dwelling places where she speaks about spiritual delight overflowing through all the dwelling places 'down' even to the body itself.²⁰ Should the soul use the body as a mere tool, there would be no reason why the soul should share its delight with the tool given to it only for the purpose of reaching this delight. Since Teresa states the contrary, and since she never loses sight of what happens to the body even in the mystical dwelling places, the body must be considered to be more than a mere tool.

Upon these points it is possible to draw the first conclusions. Teresa takes the unity of the body and soul for granted. Second, she considers the soul to be immaterial. Third, she is convinced of God's indwelling in the 'centre of the soul' from the very first moment of the soul's existence. I would like to develop all three of these points later upon the basic assumption that the soul is connected to the body from the very beginning of the body's existence.²¹

There arises the question of how the body-soul unity should be understood. Although the question seems to be straightforward enough, the above-mentioned points make it more complicated. The complications are these: man is capable of purely carnal existence and yet leading such a life does not prevent his having a soul. Although purely carnal existence does prevent one from *being aware* of the existence of his own soul and the divine indwelling, this lack of knowledge can be at anytime overcome by man's beginning to pray. Prayer, therefore, seems to be a means first of grasping the existence of one's own soul, and second for exploring the soul in such a way that leading a life of prayer brings man to a greater knowledge of himself (thus uncovering the still deeper regions of his own soul) and to a greater knowledge of God. This increasing knowledge of God leads man to reaching the final end reachable in this life, that is, union with God expressed by the symbol of the mystical marriage.

Therefore, it seems quite clear that the soul has to be some kind of principle connected to the body in such a way that makes possible bodily life and, what is more, spiritual life as well and both at the same time. It is also a principle that keeps the bodily life and basic bodily functions even when the 'spirit' is suspended.²²

With the question being postulated this way, the Aristotelian understanding of the human soul to be the principle of life through which we live, perceive and have understanding comes immediately to mind.²³ St Thomas (a point of reference of this work), unlike his predecessors, accepts this basic Aristotelian definition, although his own understanding is not strictly Aristotelian. Nor are his views simply platonic, nor borrowed from his teacher, Albert the Great, but his teaching seems to be quite original.

St Thomas was probably the first to try to grasp this unity without diminishing any of the two poles of human person – neither the body nor the soul.²⁴ Thus, he comes to the striking conclusion

20 M 4,2,4.

21 I am fully aware that Aquinas accepted the Aristotelian doctrine of gradual animation but this stage of the present inquiry is not a convenient place to treat this problem further since it would unnecessarily distract the reader's attention.

22 M. Frohlich understands it similarly: 'This psychology considers the soul, el alma, to be the body's governing principle.' M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 177.

23 Aristotle, *De Anima*, II,2 (414a16).

24 Cf. Anthony Pegis, *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the Thirteenth Century* (Toronto-Ontario: Pontifical Institute

that man is a unity of body and soul, in which the body shares in the act of being of the soul. However, the human soul cannot come into being otherwise than in the body. Such a solution excludes the pre-existence of the soul before body on the one hand and sets the necessity of re-union of the soul and body at the end of times on the other.²⁵

What is even more interesting for our topic is that St Thomas does not speak about man only as about the highest organism – ‘the rational animal’ – but he also enumerates man among the spiritual substances, or more precisely he enumerates the human intellective soul among the spiritual substances.²⁶ Due to this ‘spiritualness’, the intellective soul is capable of knowledge of other spiritual realities, although due to its connection to human body it is always in its knowledge (to at least a certain degree) dependent on the human body. However, the knowledge surpassing the materiality of the created world is not automatic, nor is it reached by everyone, even if it potentially might be.

For if St Thomas is right in his claim that the human intellect is not *per se* hindered by anything corporeal although materially bound sensuality plays its important role, then there is not anything in the intellect itself that would prevent knowledge of the transcendentals. To sum it up, the knowledge of spiritual realities is not automatic but is potentially possible for anyone.

St Thomas seems to drive us closer to the answer to the question of whether there is something in the soul which might be denoted as the ‘superior part of the soul’ of which Teresa speaks quite often in contrast to the ‘inferior part of the soul’. Such an entity should be able to be united with God, to gain knowledge independent of the bodily sensation (at least in a certain respect) and ultimately to gain union with God himself. As such, it should be immaterial in itself and in a certain respect independent of the body. It seems that the intellect (νοῦς) meets all of these criteria.

The human soul is, therefore, for St Teresa a principle closely connected to the body, though in its intellective part (and to a certain respect) it is independent of the body. The dependence is seen first in its coming-into-being and persevering the body in existence, and second, in the knowledge which is to a certain respect dependent on bodily sensation. The independence of the body is, contrarywise, shown in the ‘superior part of the soul’, which corresponds to the intellect, as I show further in this chapter. The unity of body and soul is, as I believe, further reflected in the fact that St Teresa never completely loses sight of corporeity.

2.3. THE INTERIOR CASTLE: THE SOUL

In the previous part the basic features of Teresa’s symbolic *Interior Castle* have been set as a framework and some of the dangers of this symbolic language explained. Further, I have shown Teresa’s notion of the soul cannot be adequately comprehended without its being supported by the unity of the body and soul. At this point it is time to ‘enter the castle’ with St Teresa, in order to explore her notion of the soul in more depth. However, even at this point the question seems to be too complex and some further distinctions need be drawn, otherwise there is a risk that many important features will be lost. Therefore, ‘turn your eyes toward the centre, which is the room or royal chamber where the King stays, and think of how a palmetto²⁷ has many leaves surrounding

of Medieval Studies, 1978). Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: a Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae 1a 75–89* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Iosephus Gretd, OSB, *Elementa philosophiae aristotelico-thomisticae*, Vol. I - II, 8th edition (Barcelona: Herder 1946). Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London-New York: Routledge, 2004).

25 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, q. 75–76, *De Ente et Essentia*.

26 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*. James Etwiler, “Man as Embodied Spirit”, *The New Scholasticism*, 54, 1980, pp. 358–377. Tomáš Machula. “Člověk jako živočich rozumový a vtělený duch: Tomáš Akvinský a současná tomistická perspektiva”, *Filozofia*, 66, 2001, no. 1, pp. 49–58. J. Etwiler, p.359–360, 365. James Lehrberger, “The Anthropology of Aquinas’s De ente et essential”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, 1998, 51, vol. 4, pp. 829–847. James Robb, “St. Thomas and the Infinity of Human Beings”, *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 1981, vol. 55, pp. 118–125.

27 M 1,2,8. Although the image is made clear by Teresa’s own explanation, it is not altogether clear to which plant she refers. She originally uses the expression ‘palmito’, which is simply a diminutive of the word ‘palm’. On the one hand, there are several species of dwarf palms with leaves growing around the centre which may be eaten. These come from the Americas

and covering the tasty part that can be eaten.²⁸

By the mention of the ‘palmetto’ Teresa again points to the multi-dimensional character of the dwelling places and also to their ‘stratification’. M. Frohlich adds: ‘Teresa is able to place before our minds the essential unifying dimension that lies behind all the “parts” and “stages” of the journey of spiritual transformation.’ Further, she even does not understand the spiritual journey as a linear one (hence, the symbol of dwelling places being all around and the use of palmetto) but understands it as ‘a series of finer and finer refractions of one’s awareness of the light from a single divine “place” that encompass the whole world.’²⁹

Teresa’s reference to the palmetto also covers one aspect of dividing the whole topic – and this is according to the individual dwelling places. However, that is not the only respect – there are at least two more. Teresa does not only speak about the seven dwelling places, but also about the ‘superior and inferior part of the soul’ and about the ‘natural and supernatural’. This last criterion refers both to spiritual life and to knowledge. These three criteria are not, however, mutually exclusive, and this is why, as I believe, many of the commentators have not been able to grasp what she means by the ‘superior and inferior’ parts of the soul and how the individual dwelling places relate to the ‘natural and supernatural’. Therefore, most of the commentaries follow the basic pattern of the seven dwelling places. I do this also but only in a limited manner and for specific purposes.

The purposes are these: a. I use it as a basic outline and provide the reader with the basic and crucial characteristics of each dwelling place; b. upon this division of the topic I try to show that the individual dwelling places are grouped into three ‘larger’ groups based on certain criteria. These criteria help, in turn, to grasp how Teresa applies ‘natural and supernatural’ perspective; c. the characteristics of the individual dwelling places also help us to see the correlates with Thomistic psychology which in turn leads to understanding what Teresa means by the ‘superior and inferior’ parts of the soul.

Even though I work with the division into the seven dwelling places I do not rely on it heavily throughout the work but I rather rely on the division into the natural and supernatural. Nevertheless, neither of these topics would be comprehensible before treating the individual dwelling places. Step one, therefore, is to enter the castle and explore it in the perspective of ‘what it is’, ‘what the soul looks like’. But in asking such a question, it is necessary to realise that the soul is an immaterial entity, the principle of life and cognition. However, Teresa compares it to the castle of seven dwelling places being surrounded by walls and courtyards, thus making it clear that we should not treat the soul as a monolith. What do these dwelling places refer to, then? Can soul have some ‘parts’? Well, Aquinas speaks about various powers of the soul and even divides them into two larger groups, the lesser and the higher. Among the lesser he enumerates the passions and the inner senses. These refer to the *sensus communis*, *vis cogitativa*, sensual memory (as distinct from the intellectual memory) and the phantasy. Among the higher intellectual powers, he includes the intellect, will and intellectual memory.

Perhaps we could find behind the dwelling places Aquinas’s powers of the soul. It sounds promising at least but to find out whether these two notions match or not I think it necessary to ask what stands in the focus of each of the dwelling places: what the topic is, so to say. But, there is

and since Spain traded with Latin America since the XVth Century, it may well be that the specimen of these palms was already grown on the Iberian peninsula by Teresa’s times or that she knew the edible product. This ‘edible centre’ is also called ‘the heart of palms’, the reportedly delicious and very precious inner part of the stem of certain palms which is extracted during a complicated process of removing various layers of the bark and uneatable parts of the stem. Endnote no. 10 of the English translation of her works, however, raises difficulties, for it states: ‘A plant about a foot in height, which grows in Andalusia and Valencia, resembling the palm tree. Only the center or heart, the tender part, is eaten.’ The botanical name of the plant is not provided. The question of whether it actually was product of a palm or only a plant resembling palm led me to consult a native Spaniard. It seems that the English footnote is misleading and the ‘palmito’ mentioned in Teresa’s text really denotes a product of a fully-grown palm stem, used for culinary specialities also nowadays. In this case I rely on Wikipedia: [https://es.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmito_\(gastronom%C3%ADa\)](https://es.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmito_(gastronom%C3%ADa)).

28 M 1,2,8.

29 Both citations in M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, pp. 191–192.

one important notice: we should not lose from sight that Teresa's symbol covers both the questions regarding 'what it is' and 'what it does'. In order not to fall into confusion it is necessary always to concentrate on that aspect which forms the topic of the particular part of the text. I say this because Teresa herself, in her typically unsystematic manner, often seems to switch various perspectives without warning, causing no little confusion. It may also happen that what stands in the focus in the individual dwelling places is not the question of 'what it is' but rather the question of 'what it does'. Therefore, it is crucial always to ask whether she refers at any particular moment to the thing or to the action.

2.3.1. FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD CHAMBERS

For St Teresa the first crucial point comes with the decision to take one's religious life seriously and focus on God and things pertaining to Him. This turn should be marked by one's decision to pray. She expresses this in the image of 'leaving the courtyards and entering the castle'. Now, it was shown that the symbol of the walls and courtyards is a symbol of a body and that which pertains to the body. Further, 'entering the castle' is conditioned by prayer. However, 'entering the castle' does not refer only to the 'space' but also to a new way of life, a spiritual one. Therefore, I conclude that 'leaving the courtyards' refers also to 'leaving aside a purely carnal way of life'.

Once man 'enters the castle', he finds himself in the first dwelling places. Using the parable of a black cloth of sin covering the whole castle, Teresa speaks about the first chambers as where one still goes very much in darkness, being strongly affected by various kinds of reptiles (symbol of passions and worldly desires) and only sometimes glimpses rays of light (grace). In these chambers man is inclined to turn away from the spiritual path and return to the previous way of life. According to Teresa, a lot of God's help is needed for such a person to persevere in his new course, although this grace is hardly ever perceived or known. It seems that these passions and desires are the main topic of these dwelling places.

In the second chambers, the combat with the bodily passions ceases a little, although it does not stop entirely. The lesser they have hold over the person, the freer one feels. However, not even these chambers are void of severe battle. Only it seems that the battleground changes and instead of permanently fighting with the most base desires, one is rather tempted to despair by the recollections of previous sins, imperfections and leniencies. The fantasy makes the state even worse by presenting to the person the images of hell and perdition. G. Ahlgren raises a further problem – man in this stage of spiritual life realises how far he is from reaching the capacity [of the soul] and the amount of time and effort needed for its realisation.³⁰ Now we should realise that both of these typical experiences (the reminder of past sins and the images of the hell) are closely related namely to the sensual memory and phantasy as two of the inner senses mentioned by Aquinas.

If one is able to suffer through this stage, he may suddenly find himself in the third chambers. These are quite strange, for after the two dwelling places rich in scary images and the impression of tough, dangerous combat, one finds himself in a relatively peaceful stage. St Teresa writes quite explicitly that these chambers are reached by the majority of good Christians leading an ordered life according to the gospel, giving alms and praying.

In asking what is typical of or important in these dwelling places, one might be tempted to say – nothing, this is just an ordinary life. However, under closer scrutiny it becomes clear that there happens one extraordinary event – one is offered the choice to proceed even further, beyond this well-ordered life, to the mystical regions of further dwelling places. This choice consists in giving God everything. St Teresa uses as an example the New Testament parable of the rich young man who was asked by Our Lord to give up everything and follow him.³¹ Needless to say, the young man turned his back on Jesus and went away.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

³¹ M 3,1,7.; Lk 18,18–30.

St Teresa suggests that the request is not only to offer the Lord all the material goods but to offer everything one has – social status, intelligence, education, one’s whole life. Since this question belongs rather to the category of ‘what the soul does’, I will return to this topic once again in the next chapter where I hope fully to describe the radicality of this offer. However, even so, there are few points that should be mentioned now.

G. Ahlgren understands this offer to proceed even beyond the well-ordered life as a step from the relationship of ‘servitude’ into a ‘deeper partnership’ with God. The request of renunciation of everything means, for her, primarily the renunciation of the previously constructed identity for the sake of new ‘relational’ identity.³²

I am not totally in accord with her view but it will serve the purpose of clarification of the topic. First, I find the expression ‘previously constructed identity’ to be apt, although I am not sure Ahlgren and I would understand its meaning identically. I think that it is an succinct expression as long as it is understood as a renunciation of the false identity one has created himself; in other words, it is an identity proceeding from a misunderstanding of one’s self. It was mentioned already that the spiritual journey towards the final union with God is also a journey of self-knowledge. Therefore, Teresa assumes that we do not have a proper understanding of ourselves before we reach the end. And since we do not have a proper self-understanding, we ‘form’ our identity upon false ideas, or dreams. Thus, renunciation of this ‘previously constructed identity’ would translate as a ‘renunciation of the false ideas about one’s self’, therefore giving God the possibility to show man what this man’s real identity is.

Although I am in accord with Ahlgren on this point, I am not so regarding her other claim. The idea that the ‘previously constructed identity’ is exchanged for a ‘relational’ identity seems dubious: how this ‘relational identity’ should be understood is not explained. Only the mere fact of me standing in relation to someone else does not change my own identity. It could be argued that there is an ontological change in entering union with God (a new kind of relation) through which man would understand himself. But to that there is to say that the ‘ontological’ change happens at baptism through which man is joined to the mystical body of Christ and thus has already entered into a new, intimate relation with Christ. Therefore, it is rather through the sacrament of baptism that one receives the ‘relational identity’ than through entering into the mystical stages of interior life. Even being a Christian means understanding one’s self as ‘standing in relation with God’.

Now, it might be argued that there is no need to understand the personal and ‘relational’ identity as mutually exclusive. The relational identity could be seen as another and/or deeper level of the personal identity. That might be the case, however, I think Teresa’s idea is somewhat different. Teresa assumes that we originally do not understand ourselves and only gradually come to the right notion of who we are. The plenitude of this proper self-understanding is reached only in the final union with God in the seventh dwelling place of the mystical marriage. Now, what she claims in the third dwelling places as a necessary, initiatory step into the mystical stage of the spiritual life is the renunciation of everything and she shows that this kind of renunciation is radical in its claim. In clumsy words, Teresa slowly unravels her idea that the renunciation in question is a deeply personal one. By personal I mean that the request is to abandon our own personality as we have known it up to that moment – our false self-understanding (the ‘previously constructed identity’). This relates to our understanding, knowledge (or lack of it), intellect and will. In this respect, the claim of the third dwelling places is radical, for it goes to the very roots of our being.

Not that those who do not accept this challenge do not give God everything or do not strive to give God everything. It may well be that they do. After all, the third dwelling places are characterised by a well-ordered Christian life and Teresa explicitly mentions prayer, a life of virtues, penance and good deeds: a life lived in the awe of Our Lord, a life lived from the sacraments. All of these require from a person much renunciation and sacrifices. When she raises the parable of

³² G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle*, p. 40.

the rich young man, she has something other on her mind. I believe she wants to depict a crucial decision to give to God one's own very being in its core, soul and body. She sighs that despite the offer coming to many, too few have courage enough to accept it and thus risk confrontation with their misunderstanding of themselves.

To sum it up, the outer walls and courtyards represent the body, the first chambers deal with bodily passions, the second chambers with the memory and fantasy and the third chambers with a good, ordered life and one important choice. The *Interior Castle* makes it quite clear that the first stage of the spiritual life, that is, walking through the first three dwelling places, cannot be skipped or omitted, even though one may (even at the beginning) experience temporary and short-term mystical phenomena usually due to much more perfect stages of spiritual life.³³ The first stage is 'wholly' dependent on man's own activity and striving to proceed forward in his spiritual life. By the 'wholly' I mean the main effort is put on the part of man – surely the grace of God is necessary in every stage, even at the point of conversion.

The unity of body and soul is significant not only in the sense that the soul is the principle of the life of the body but also that the body plays its role in the life of the soul be it for good or not. This means that it *does* matter what happens with the body for it is reflected in the life of the soul. It also means that the first stages of spiritual life are closely connected to the body and/or bodily sensation. Even though the memory in the further dwelling places is often mentioned with the intellect and the will (as three intellectual powers), the memory mentioned in the second dwelling places rather resembles the sensual memory belonging among the inner senses and therefore also connected to the body.³⁴

2.3.2. FOURTH CHAMBERS

The fourth dwelling places represent the beginning of the mystical life. This goes hand in hand with Teresa putting gradually a greater stress on the will and not so much on the intellect. The importance of the will grows steadily from the fourth dwelling places to the last chamber. The distinction between the will and the intellect will prove (in many respects) crucial in latter chapters.

In this stage of spiritual life God slowly yet gradually becomes to act Himself in the soul of the person. He exerts his power more actively, which results in several mystical experiences. Yet, it seems that in this stage the mystical experiences are still relatively rare and definitely short-term, especially in comparison to the mystical experiences of the sixth dwelling places. Despite the growth of activity on the part of God, man is still active in his own spiritual development. Perhaps the most fitting would be to say that the activity regarding the life of the soul is shared between man and God. St Teresa calls this chamber 'the heart'. M. Frohlich is convinced that 'the heart' is assimilated in the term 'centre of the soul'; while 'the heart' is one part among many, the 'centre of the soul' is only one and the foundation of all.³⁵

Due to this being 'now not' a natural stage and 'not yet' a supernatural one, these dwelling places form a kind of borderline. M. Frohlich understands them as a 'transitory realm between religious experience in which the mystical dimension is only implicit and religious experience in which the mystical dimension will become explicitly conscious. Those at this stage have not yet definitively crossed the border to being "mystics" in the narrow sense, but they stay poised at the crossing-point.' She further sees the whole spiritual life as described by Teresa as the gradual focusing on the 'central point' – the indwelling Divine Persons – instead of being focused on 'the world'.³⁶

The fourth dwelling places are important further, firstly because Teresa explains in them the difference between two kinds of delighting experiences. One of these joys is called 'contentos',

33 Cf. M 1,1,4; 2,1,2; 2,1,7.

34 The 'sensual memory' enumerated among the 'inner senses' by T. Aquinas, ST I, q. 78, a.4.

35 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 203.

36 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 197.

contentment, and the other ‘gustos’, the delights. She stresses one important thing – the former has its roots in human nature, whereas the latter has its roots in God and are given by him according to his own wisdom. Further, the former may be experienced also in a body and on the level of the senses (pleasure from sensual enjoyment, for example, hearing an excellent classical concert), whereas the latter pertains solely to the soul (unless one has reached the final union) and therefore, are not felt in the body.³⁷

Second, Teresa mentions certain types of prayer, which she includes under the rank of ‘mystical’ in these fourth dwelling places for the first time. This is another reason why she enumerates these chambers already among the mystical ones, although not exclusively. One of the types of mystical prayer first mentioned here is the prayer of quiet, or the *oración de quietud*.

2.3.3. FIFTH, SIXTH AND SEVENTH CHAMBERS

The truly mystical dwelling places are the fifth, sixth and a final, the seventh. St Teresa distinguishes them by the use of the nuptial imagery – the three stages of the sixteenth-century marriage process.

In that era, the state of betrothal constituted a quite distinct social condition, with privileges, customs and responsibilities carefully distinguished from those of the prior state of being single and the subsequent state of being married. Thus Teresa’s nuptial allegory images mark definite and specific changes of state within the continuity of a developing relationship of ‘union’.³⁸

T. Dicken, however, warns, that these dwelling places are distinguished rather by a difference of degree of the union than by the kind of union.³⁹

The fifth dwelling places are the place of important change in the soul. St Teresa uses the famous symbol of a silkworm building around itself a cocoon so that finally a beautiful, small, white butterfly may be born. Nevertheless, these chapters are full with extraordinary symbolical expressions. To show the increasing encounter of the soul with the God, St Teresa also uses images from the *Song of the Songs* when she speaks about the wine cellar. A common topic of all of these images is the hiding and seeking of the Lord and the soul’s striving to please Him. Perhaps the most fitting is to speak about the courtship between the soul and God.

G. Ahlgren understands these dwelling places as a ‘place’ where the soul for the first time encounters its own depth and this depth becomes a location for a powerful form of transformation and speaks about the union between God and the soul in terms of ‘erotic’ love explaining that ‘eros’ means simply ‘creative, connective energy that fuels all movement in relation to God’.⁴⁰ Further, she states, that

The soul is beginning, through the moments of unitive encounter, to share in the essence of God by participation, causing a transformation of personhood. The centre of the soul where these exchanges between God and soul occur is being made into the very dwelling place of God, and God is becoming the very dwelling place of the soul.⁴¹

The sixth dwelling places are by far the longest part of the whole work. They are rich in the most fantastic mystical phenomena – visions, locutions, ecstasies, flights of the spirit, wounds of love, transverberation.⁴² To give some reason to all those mystical phenomena, St Teresa uses the parallel of engagement a. for all that happens, and b. to explain why the last stage is relatively peaceful

37 This is important for there are people who tend to read Teresa’s descriptions of the mystical experiences in terms of sexuality. But that approach is hugely misleading, since Teresa herself many times refuses the idea that the ‘gustos’, the spiritual delights, could be felt in any way in the body.

38 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 183.

39 T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, p. 424.

40 G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle*, pp. 63–65.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

42 G. Ahlgren deems them to be a manual for ‘discerning spirits’. *Ibid.*, p. 79

in comparison to this one. Just as those engaged to be married try to know one another better and come to know the family background of the other, so it happens between the soul and God. This is the reason why God shows so much of his bounty to the soul in these dwelling places – as a promise made to his bride; a promise of rich life and share in all his glory.

The interesting thing is that St Teresa compares most of the mystical experiences here to bodily sensual apprehension. She speaks about the eyes of the soul and seeing that is either through the medium of images or seeing in a bodily form (imaginative vision) or ‘seeing’ without such images (intellectual vision).⁴³ She takes a lot of trouble to stress that in either case such seeing resembles the sight of bodily eyes yet is, in itself, something completely different which happens in the soul without any kind of mediation of the bodily senses. Very similar is the case of hearing (locutions), touch (fire of love/prayer, transverberation), taste (ecstasy).⁴⁴ Also, the interesting thing is that she actually speaks about impulses proceeding to the soul from God, from the very centre of the soul.⁴⁵

All of these ‘spiritual-sensorial’ experiences lead, according to G. Ahlgren, to deepening the awareness to the reality of God and entail both the epistemological and ontological level ‘entailing both what and how the soul knows.’⁴⁶ Further on, she sees various events there as a radical ontological shift taking place in the soul which leads man to integrate fully the divine presence.⁴⁷ However, the ‘radical ontological shift’ is baptism rather than any of the mystical experiences. Moreover, Ahlgren’s view overlooks that God dwells in the centre of the soul from the very beginning. Therefore, where it is possible to think about a ‘radical’ epistemological shift, it can hardly be seen as ‘ontological one’.⁴⁸ However, Ahlgren adds that the ‘change’ of the sixth dwelling places leads to the change of the ‘reconciliatory’ perspective ‘grounded in the understanding that the ontological connection between humanity and divinity is stronger than any division between God and humanity caused by human sin.’⁴⁹

The seventh dwelling place is the only one that is singular in number. It is the dwelling place of God, in which the Most Holy Trinity abides. Frohlich notes that this dwelling place belongs rather to God himself than to the soul.⁵⁰ This is the place and the stage of the full mystical union. This is also the only dwelling place that does not have its counterpart in the *Life* and in comparison to the previous dwelling places it is relatively peaceful or the ‘stunningly quiet [...], nonecstatic, permanent experience of God’s indwelling presence,’ as G. Ahlgren would say.⁵¹ M. Frohlich would add that the soul experiences a perfect peace here for the ‘union’ is no longer perceived as proceeding ‘from’ the centre to the soul, but the soul is permanently ‘at’ the centre.⁵²

St Teresa refers to this last chamber also as to the ‘centre of the soul’,⁵³ or the ‘most interior part of the soul’,⁵⁴ where the unity of wills is complete, and man lives in the constant presence of God, where the reconciliation of Martha and Mary is reached. Firstly and foremostly Teresa uses this parable for a reconciliation between the active and the contemplative life (and many commentators concentrate on this meaning).⁵⁵ But in the ninth chapter of this thesis I show

43 M 6,1,1, 6,3,12, 6,4–11.

44 For inner locutions, see M 6,3,7; for the other phenomena, see M 6,2,3; 6,2,5; 6,11,2–4.

45 M 6,2,1.

46 G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle*, p. 80.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

48 This view does not provide solid reasons for speaking about an ‘ontological change’ as this always remains only a ‘threat’ and never really becomes a reality. Moreover, when she at the end of the chapter, explains the ‘ontological’ change she speaks only in terms of ‘knowledge’ normally denoting the ‘epistemology’. Cf. ‘Thus, the soul is being changed ontologically through its growing knowledge of human potential and its experiential knowledge of the ultimate reality of the communion of all things in God.’ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

50 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 224.

51 G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle*, p. 113.

52 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 225.

53 ‘*El centro del alma*’.

54 ‘*Lo muy interior del alma/lo muy más interior*’.

55 G. Ahlgren understands Mary as a symbol of God’s permanent indwelling in creation and Martha as his active, redemptive and renewing activity in the world in which the soul after reaching this final union takes part. G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa*

that the 'reconciliation' is reached on several more plains.

By reaching a state of permanent union, the 'acting in the world' and 'contemplating' of God's mysteries are no longer mutually exclusive. Man can live both positions simultaneously. From the fifth dwelling places to the last one man loses completely control over his own spiritual development and care for the growth of the soul is wholly placed on God. It is, therefore, God who is the 'active element' in the spiritual journey. The 'active part' of man rests only in the giving of one's self, the giving of one's own will. M. Frohlich stresses an important point. Union in the strict sense, 'goes beyond all concepts, beyond all images, and even beyond all "experiences"'.⁵⁶ This is the reason why Teresa, as any other mystic, was in such want of words and/or concepts to explain what is, per se, beyond explanations, especially to those who lack the experience. In a way it is as if one tried to explain university mathematics to a child in the first class.

Now let us remind ourselves that the symbol of the interior castle refers both to the nature of the soul and to its activity. In this chapter, the nature of the human soul according to Teresa stands in focus. In this perspective, we ask whether the individual dwelling places refer to certain powers of the soul or not. The question was quite simple for the first two dwelling places, as it was shown that these chambers refer to the base passions and inner senses. However, from the third dwelling places onwards the topic becomes somewhat more complicated since it seems that Teresa concentrates rather on the second symbolic level, that is, on the activity. This shift of the perspective either means that there are no powers of the soul connected to the latter dwelling places or we have to resort to the art of deduction.

The former possibility is not convincing, since the symbol would soon lose its meaning, or rather, one of its meanings. Why would Teresa refer to the soul as to a castle as if it were a place if there were not anything towards which this symbol would be connected to? Therefore, I am about to resort to the second option. Now, let us consider, what happens in individual dwelling places. I wish to start with the last three dwelling places as it will be easier to consider the fourth and the third afterwards. So, in the fifth to seventh dwelling places Teresa pays special heed to the will, intellect and, in a limited way, also to the memory. In fact, from the fourth dwelling places onwards, she repeatedly stresses the importance of the will, the renunciation of the will, the will over the intellect. She does this so vigorously that one may be tempted to see these dwelling places as pertaining solely to the power of the will and not at all to the intellect.

However, I do not think this is a correct view. Although it is true that Teresa stresses the will over the intellect, she nevertheless never loses sight of the intellect and from time to time refers to it again, especially in her descriptions of the mystical experiences of the sixth dwelling places. Moreover, the seventh dwelling place of the mystical marriage seems to be a kind of reconciliation symbolised by the 'reconciliation of Martha and Mary'. Since Teresa uses this symbol, it refers, as is usual with symbols, to more than one reality. One of the levels of reconciliation is, as I believe, between the intellect and the will. I am convinced that Teresa puts the intellect aside for a specific reason and this reason is related to the question of knowledge.

Since Teresa uses a many-layered symbolic language it is necessary to unravel it only gradually. This in turn has one disadvantage – there are points which I am not able to argue for at the beginning but only in the latter parts, which I do. At this point it must suffice to show that there are good reasons to assume that the last three dwelling places are not connected only to the faculty of the will but also to the intellect. I return to this point further in chapters five and six. In chapter five I also briefly treat the faculty of memory as implicitly present in Teresa's thought, though she does not treat it explicitly as a power that would play an equally important role in the last three dwelling places as the will and the intellect do.

of Avila's Interior Castle, pp. 115, 119; Similarly, E. Howells sees this cooperation both of the 'active' and 'contemplative' element as a 'cooperative relationship of the whole soul and body to develop within the interior region, in which the virtuous activity of Martha becomes *part of the interior life of Mary*.' E. Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, p. 80.
56 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 219.

There remain the fourth and the third dwelling places. Now, the third dwelling places seem to constitute some kind of peak of human efforts and they are characterised by a well ordered life no longer subdued to disordered passions and sensuality. Yet, they do not seem to refer so exclusively to the higher powers of the soul as do the last three chambers. However, when Teresa treats some of the mystical experiences in the latter dwelling places she distinguishes between two states connected to the mind, one to which she refers as to a ‘rambling of thought’ (*pensamiento*) and the other which is more calm (*entendimiento*). It seems that the former refers to a natural way of intellection, to discursive thought, to rationality, whereas the latter refers rather to intellectual insights and/or contemplation. At this point, I suggest understanding the third dwelling places as being connected to the reason, ratio.

To support my point I offer several points for consideration. Ratio, according to Aquinas (but not only him), does not refer to a separate power of the soul but is ‘a part of’ the intellect or rather is one of the ‘functions’ of the intellect, the lower one, which enables one to gain some knowledge. Aquinas would in fact speak about the active and the passive intellect: the active intellect in cooperation with the senses illuminating a passive intellect. In this sense, the third dwelling places can already be seen as being connected to the higher faculties of the soul. In this respect, the fourth dwelling places, the borderline, should be seen as marking a transition between the ‘lower’ *ratio* and the ‘higher’ intellect. Teresa calls the former *pensamiento* and the latter *entendimiento*. Aquinas would speak either about the *ratio* and *intellectus*. In any case, this discrimination is important for one key question of the second part of this work and that is the question of knowledge.

Teresa in fact, uses in her text the three different expressions *entendimiento*, *pensamiento* and *conocimiento*. It is not beyond doubt what she means by them, for on the one hand, all of them may be translated by an identical term. On the other hand, the way they are used throughout the text suggests Teresa uses them rather in the manner of technical terms to describe the actions of various ‘faculties’.

M. Frohlich stresses that the English translation assimilates *el conocimiento* and *el entendimiento* into one term.⁵⁷ For her, *entendimiento* is the spiritual faculty of man, while *pensamiento* is only ‘the chatter of thinking’. She supposes that St Teresa further assimilates the *pensamiento* with the imagination.⁵⁸ Therefore, the correct translation for *conocimiento* should rather be ‘consciousness’, according to Frohlich.⁵⁹

E. Howells translates *pensamiento* as ‘mind’, whereas *entendimiento* is ‘intellect’, while *conocimiento* is for him ‘part of the intellect that enters into union, while the rest of the intellect remains outside’.⁶⁰

Upon thorough analysis of the original text, I am not fully satisfied with either of these solutions. Although M. Frohlich is right in that the English translation does not differentiate between the original expressions satisfactorily, I do not find her solution convincing either. *Pensamiento* as a ‘chatter of thinking’ and *entendimiento* as the spiritual faculty of man can be accepted providing the ‘chatter of thinking’ is used as another expression for discursive thought. Moreover, St Teresa herself uses ‘discursive thinking’ in connection with *pensamiento* as well. However, I disagree that St Teresa assimilates ‘*pensamiento*’ with the imagination. Although there are passages that may be read in such a way that both terms intermingle, there are also a few others where it seems St Teresa distinguishes between both terms.⁶¹ Moreover, in the latter dwelling places (especially the

57 M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 200.

58 Ibid., p. 178.

59 Ibid., p. 200.

60 E. Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, pp. 77–78.

61 Cf. ‘Y no penséis que es por el entendimiento adquirido procurando pensar dentro de sí a Dios, ni por la imaginación, imaginándole en sí.’ (IC 4:3.3); ‘(...)Y por ventura más inquieta la imaginación con la fuerza que se ha hecho a no pensar nada.’ (IC 4:3.5); ‘Y acaece que en un instante le enseñan tantas cosas juntas que en muchos años que trabajara en ordenarlas con su imaginación y pensamiento no pudiera de mil partes la una.’ (M 6,5,7). The other noteworthy point is that the expression ‘pensamiento’ is used much oftener than the expression ‘imaginación’, see footnote 33.

sixth) while describing various mystical experiences, St Teresa often speaks about the imagination and memory, but not about *pensamiento*. Therefore, the identity of *pensamiento* and imagination is not beyond doubt.

With E. Howells I would translate *entendimiento*⁶² as the ‘intellect’ (Lat. *intellectus*), corresponding to the ‘passive intellect’ in Thomistic vocabulary, for two reasons. First, Teresa uses *entendimiento* in connection to the ‘higher part of the soul’ and mystical experiences, that is, to the part of the intellective soul least dependent on the materiality. Second, she distinguishes it from *pensamiento*. E. Howells further translates *pensamiento*⁶³ as ‘mind’. This is acceptable under a certain condition. Supposing the mind would not be understood as an equivalent to the intellect or as a more general category than the intellect for it is closely related to the ‘chatter of thinking’ or the ‘discursive thought’, therefore, it seems the more appropriate term is ‘reason’ (Lat. *ratio*; or the active intellect in Thomistic terminology). Regarding the *conocimiento*,⁶⁴ E. Howells’s suggestion that it is a part of the intellect can be accepted providing it is understood as something *pertaining to the intellect*, not as one of the intellective soul’s powers but as the *act* of those powers, as it seems St Teresa means simply ‘cognition’ (Lat. *cognitio*).

The last term, the *conocimiento*, does not play a crucial role, as the *pensamiento* and *entendimiento*, therefore I set it aside now. However, the other two terms are crucial. It seems their distinction corresponds very well with the other dividing criteria of the interior castle. Teresa, as has been hinted, uses other dividing viewpoints besides the seven dwelling places. This is a topic of the next part.

2.4. THREE MAIN LEVELS: BODY – INTELLECT – BORDERLINE

The division of *Interior Castle* into the seven dwelling places does not seem to be the only possible one. An intent look at the structure of the work shows two other possible ‘groupings’ of the various chambers. As the symbol of the castle is multidimensional, these ‘divisions’ are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Rather, they represent a different perspective of the whole book. First, St Teresa uses the expressions ‘inferior’ and ‘superior’ part of the soul. At first glance, these might seem to be only arbitrary or obscure terms. However, there is a perspective that sheds light on them and, at the same time, this viewpoint shows also the second way of grouping the individual dwelling places. The question is to ask to what extent the respective dwelling places are connected to the body and/or to the intellect. This fundamental division is further reflected in the questions regarding a. who the prime ‘active agent’ is in them, or to put it otherwise, who the main promoter is of the spiritual life, b. what kind of pleasure pertains to them, and c. what the respective end is of each stage of the interior life. All of these questions, however, can be subsumed under the grouping of ‘natural/supernatural’ dichotomy.

Before proceeding further, I would like to point out, that the ‘inferior/superior part’ division refers rather to the question about the nature of the soul, whereas the ‘natural/supernatural’ refers to its activity.

First, let us consider the ‘inferior/superior’ part of the soul as referring to the nature of the soul. From this point of view we can realise that the first three dwelling places are more connected to the body, at least in some respect, for according to Aquinas our rationality always depends on our sensation. On the contrary, the last three dwelling places (fifth to seventh) are not connected to the body in any direct way but solely to the higher intellectual powers, since it was shown that the part of the soul which transcends the body and is itself immaterial is the intellect. The fourth dwelling

62 For the use of ‘*entendimiento*’ in the original text, see M 1,1,1; 1,2,1; 1,2,11; 2,1,3; 2,1,4; 4,1,2; 4,1,6; 4,1,8; 4,1,13; 4,2,3; 4,3,3; 4,3,5; 4,3,6; 4,3,7; 4,3,8; 5,1,1; 5,1,4; 5,1,5; 5,1,11; 5,4,8; 6,1,9; 6,3,5; 6,3,7; 6,3,15; 6,3,18; 6,4,3; 6,7,7; 6,7,10; 6,7,11; 6,9,5; 6,9,9; 6,11,3; 7,1,9; 7,3,11.

63 For the use of ‘*pensamiento*’, see M 1,1,8; 2,1,8; 3,1,6; 3,2,3; 3,2,5; 4,1,8; 4,1,9; 4,1,11; 4,1,14; 4,2,3; 4,2,10; 4,3,4; 4,3,6-7; 5,1,3; 5,1,5; 5,3,11; 6,3,11; 6,3,13; 6,3,18; 6,5,7; 6,7,15; 6,8,7; 6,9,10; 6,9,12-13; 6,11,2; 7,3,8; 7,4,3; 7,4,12; 7,4,14.

64 For the use of ‘*conocimiento*’, see M 1,1,8; 1,2,8; M 1,2,11; M 1,2,13; M 4,1,10; M 4,3,6; M 5,3,1; M 6,4,4; M 6,5,8; M 6,5,10; M 6,6,5; M 6,8,4; M 6,9,14; M 6,10,7.

places seem to constitute some kind of a borderline between the body and the ‘spirit’. When St Teresa uses the expressions ‘inferior’ and ‘superior’ part of the soul it is likely that she means either those dwelling places pertaining to the body and bodily sensation plus ratio (‘inferior part’) or the dwelling places pertaining to the intellect (‘superior part’).

This is further supported by M. Frohlich who understands the ‘inferior’ and ‘superior’ parts as two strata of the soul and connects the ‘inferior’ to the senses (both exterior and interior), whereas the ‘superior’ is according to her the seat of the ‘higher’ intellectual faculties (intellect, will and memory), as well. She is also convinced that the ‘superior part’ is in Teresa’s texts also called ‘the spirit’.⁶⁵ The non-corporeal character of the latter group of the dwelling places is stressed by T. Dicken. He comments on an ‘interior quasi-sensation’ character of the mystical experiences but argues that it cannot be put into a connection with anything bodily for the corporeal sense (both interior and exterior) does not take any part in these communications.⁶⁶ He further (primarily while treating the anatomy of the soul in St John of the Cross) echoes scholastic psychology writing that the ‘inferior part’ of the soul really pertains to the sensitive part while the seat of the higher faculties (intellect, memory and will) pertains to the ‘higher part’ of the soul.⁶⁷

E. Howells understands the distinction between the ‘inferior’ and ‘superior’ part of the soul to form a fundamental basis of Teresa’s anthropology being further increased by the parable of Martha and Mary abundantly used throughout the scope of Teresa’s works. According to him, this fundamental distinction of the soul into the ‘inferior’ and ‘superior’ part gives Teresa the possibility to explain the distinction between the ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural, mystical’. Thus, he comes to the conclusion (quite correctly) that the ‘natural’ stage of one’s spiritual life pertains to the ‘inferior part’ of the soul (first three dwelling places), whereas the ‘super-natural’ or mystical pertains to the ‘superior’ part of the soul (last three dwelling places).⁶⁸

Second, let us consider the ‘natural/supernatural’ dichotomy as related to the ‘activity’ of the soul. This point is reflected in four different yet related elements. It is reflected a. in the question of the main agent or mover of the spiritual life, b. in the question of the final end of each stage, c. in relation to pleasure experienced, and d. in connection to two basic kinds of knowledge.

Dwelling places	Part of the Soul	Activity of the Soul
I.	Body Ratio	Inferior
II.		
III.		
IV.	Both	Mixed
V.	Intellectus	Superior
VI.		
VII.		

Fig. 1: Basic overview of the division of the dwelling places

Dwelling places	a. Agent	b. Final End	c. Pleasure	d. Knowledge
I.	Man	Natural Final End Ordered Life	contentments (contentos)	natural
II.				
III.				
IV.	Man and God	Supernatural Final End Mystical Marriage	Both	Both
V.	God		Spiritual Delights (gustos)	Supernatural
VI.				
VII.				

Fig. 2: Natural/Supernatural dichotomy

65 Frohlich, M. *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, pp. 177–178.

66 ‘The four main classes are: visions, revelations, locutions and spiritual feelings. It must be repeated that such communications can be classified in a manner which suggests sensory perception. Nothing whatever is seen, heard or perceived by the lower part of the soul.’ He understands the distinction between ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ part of the soul in the Thomistic sense. T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, p. 382.

67 T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, pp. 330–332. However, he translates the *entendimiento* as a mere ‘understanding’ and equals it to the logical rationalisation which is something St Teresa clearly distinguishes.

68 E. Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, pp. 70–71. In one respect Howells differs significantly from M. Frohlich (and from Thomistic vocabulary) and it is in the use of the term ‘interior senses’. For him this term does not refer to *sensus communis*, imagination, sensual memory and the cogitative power as would for St. Thomas, but by this term he refers to the ‘spiritual’ apprehension mentioned in the sixth dwelling places. Further, he puts this ‘spiritual apprehension’ into a strong opposition to the bodily sensation and thus sees a strong division or gap existing in the very nature of human soul. He is also convinced that Teresa has, for this reason, a real difficulty explaining the unity of the very soul, not to say its unity with the body. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 74–80. For the reasons mentioned above I do not think his view is a correct one, not to mention the other scholars cited above.

E. Howells showed us that the first three dwelling places are connected to the ‘natural’, and the last three dwelling places to the ‘supernatural’, whereas the fourth ones represent some transitory period between both (‘still natural but already supernatural’). In relation to point a., the question of the main agent, we can realise that in the first three dwelling places (irrespective of the extraordinary, short-term ‘mystical experiences given to strengthen one in his spiritual quest’)⁶⁹ the main agent is man himself. One must strain and actively attempt to advance his own spiritual development, deliberately making spiritual exercises (prayer, penance and meditation seem to be the main tools).

In the fourth dwelling places the promotion of the spiritual life is being forwarded by a mixed effort of man and God. Man still works on his own spiritual progress to a considerable degree and yet God is already active himself to a large extent. The fourth dwelling places are also the first chambers counted among the mystical ones. They are called ‘mystical’ precisely due to their dependence on the activity of God but man still needs and is able to strive a lot by himself.

The last three dwelling places are the solely mystical ones. ‘Mystical’ in the narrative of Teresa means simply that they are dependent only on the activity of God, thus God being the only actor and the man (soul) a passive recipient, a passive instrument in the hands of God.⁷⁰ In fact, Teresa even states it is impossible for a man to reach these dwelling places (stage of spiritual development) by his own efforts. This theme can be found both in the *Interior Castle* and the *Life*, the exception being the seventh dwelling places as they treat a stage of spiritual life reached only after St Teresa wrote the *Life*. Therefore, they are absent in that book. It might be the reason why St Teresa uses the symbol of only four waters not of five, for the description of the fifth and sixth dwelling places strikingly resembles the description of the third and fourth ‘water’. I hope to show this in more detail in the subsequent part.

Further, with respect to this three-fold ‘division’ of the *Interior Castle*, it is possible to distinguish two crucial *momenta* for further spiritual development and predict the subsequent stage. The first comes while man still lives ‘in the courtyards’ and consists in the decision ‘to enter’, or to take one’s religion and spiritual life seriously; this is the decision to start to pray,⁷¹ as has been said already. The second one comes in the third dwelling places and consists in the decision to give God everything.⁷²

Thus, each one of them consists in a *choice* which opens up, so to speak, the way to a different way of life. While the former is constitutive for the very beginning of the spiritual life finding its utmost expression in the third dwelling places – the orderly, good, Christian life lived in the hope of salvation – the latter is decisive for the beginning of the ‘mystical’ spiritual life finding its apex in the ‘mystical marriage’.⁷³

Teresa also writes that majority of Catholics reach the former stage of spiritual development. She nevertheless regrets that only a few find enough courage to proceed further, to the mystical stage, in the end of which it is possible to reach intimate union with God.⁷⁴

69 N.B., the occurrence of the extraordinary spiritual experiences given to the beginner and also the possibility of their not being given to ‘spiritual proficient’ is also noted in the Dominican Juan de la Cruz. ‘[...] De la Cruz explains that spiritual graces are sometimes granted to people at the beginning of their spiritual path but denied to those who are more advanced. [...] He also argues that God would expect his people to use their intelligence and memory rather than rely solely on mystical knowledge.’ E. Carrera, *Teresa of Avila’s Autobiography*: p. 76.

70 E. Münzbrock sees it in very much the same line: ‘Mann könnte sagen, dieser Weg habe – vom Menschen her gesehen – einen aktiven und einen passiven Teil.’ E. Münzbrock, *Teresa von Avila: Meister der Spiritualität*, p. 106.

71 M 1,1,7; 2,1,11.

72 M 3,1,7-8; 3,2,6-12. E. Carrera in connection to this second decision or ‘second conversion’ notes that Teresa herself often identifies herself with the Mary Magdalene at the feet of Christ, a repentant soul receiving God’s forgiveness. E. Carrera, *Teresa of Avila’s Autobiography*, pp.173-174.

73 For G. Ahlgren this second decision is a commitment to love enabling one for a ‘deeper conversion into mystical, transformative relationship with God.’ G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle*, pp. 42-43. M. Frohlich, on the other hand, sees it as the utmost fulfilment of a conversion. M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, pp. 208-210.

74 ‘Cierto, estado para desear y que, al parecer, no hay por qué se les niegue la entrada hasta la postrera morada ni se la negará el Señor, si ellos quieren, que linda disposición es para que las haga toda merced.’ M III,1,5. ‘Todas decimos que lo queremos; mas como aun es menester más para que del todo posea el Señor el alma, no basta decirlo, como no bastó al

Point b., the question of the final end, can also be treated according to the division into ‘natural/supernatural’. The first three dwelling places are places or stages of spiritual life in which man’s own efforts play a crucial role, whereas in the latter ones the crucial active role belongs to God. Moreover, although many are invited to the ‘mystical’, few actually accept. This is another way of saying that even though Teresa describes the way to the ultimate union with God, not many aspire to it. However, it is hardly conceivable that there would not be any goal for them.

Now, with the above described division in mind, it can clearly be seen that the first three dwelling places have their own goal, an end reachable by man’s own efforts or, to put it otherwise, their own ‘final’ end. This final end is, of course, the well-ordered life actually reached by the majority of Christians.

The mystical dwelling places, on the other hand, reach their climax in the final union of mystical marriage, which, alas, only a minority of Christians grasp. This end, however, is not reachable by man’s own efforts but can only be given as a free gift of God through observing certain conditions. This ‘second’ and final end, the final union, is according to Teresa unreachable solely by human efforts as it is reached only after passing through the four steps of mystical life – encounter (4th chambers), courtship (5th chambers), engagement (6th chambers) and reaching the mystical marriage (7th chamber). This final end is reached only through the gradually growing action of God himself under man’s constantly reduced own activity.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that the well-ordered life in a good hope of salvation represents a *natural end* of life in this world; the maximum which one may reach by his own efforts (this does not exclude God’s grace absolutely). On the contrary, the mystical marriage represents a *super-natural*, or mystical, *end* of one’s life.

In this context, I would like to highlight one thing connected to the fourth dwelling places. Even though these have in many respects a ‘mixed nature’, standing on the borderline between the natural and the supernatural dimension of one’s spiritual life, they are, as such, already numbered among the supernatural dwelling places. I stress this, for they do not seem to have a specific end, but rather, being already ‘mystical’, their final end is identical with the final end of the exclusively mystical dwelling places. Therefore, the final end of the fourth dwelling places is also the supernatural end of the mystical marriage.

Just as in the previous stage the activity of God is not excluded absolutely (as it is impossible), the constantly reduced human activity in the latter stage is not excluded absolutely, it only ‘gives the reins’ to God. It should also be noted that the first, natural, strenuous stage cannot be omitted or skipped. Rather, it seems that only after reaching the first end, the well-ordered life, is man offered a possibility of reaching the *very final end* of his own life in this world, being union with God himself. E. Carrera citing the Dominican Juan de la Cruz notes that ‘even if contemplation is a divine gift [the super-natural], it requires the solid foundation of a virtuous life [the natural]’, which also seems to form a solid foundation for prayer.⁷⁵ This, however, presupposes that man makes another crucial choice – whether to give up everything for God or not. Only if man decides to undergo such a trial is he drawn by God to this utmost end. The question of the final end will come to the fore once again in chapter five.

However, I would like to point out one more thing. I am convinced that Teresa understands the supernatural end as a continuation, prolongation or perhaps flowering of the natural end. That is, by deciding to step into the supernatural realm man does not abandon either his natural (spiritual) life or his natural (spiritual) end. Or to put it otherwise, by becoming a mystic one does not and cannot cease to be a good man leading an ordered Christian life. Rather, being a good man leading an ordered Christian life capacitates him to become a mystic, reaching the supernatural

mancebo cuando le dijo el Señor que si quería ser perfecto. [...] Mas aunque acá tenga muchos [vasallos] el rey de la tierra, no entran todos hasta su cámara. Entrad, entrad, hijas mías, en lo interior; pasad adelante de vuestras obrillas, que por ser cristianas debéis todo eso y mucho más y os basta que seáis vasallas de Dios.’ M 3,1,6.
75 E. Carrera, *Teresa of Avila’s Autobiography*, pp. 75, 77.

end. Thus, the natural final end is elevated, so to say, to the supernatural one.

To sum it up, the first three dwelling places are those connected to the natural, whereas the last three (four) dwelling places regard the super-natural life, while the fourth ones are a combination of both. They represent the stage of spiritual life where man is still considerably active and yet God himself is already active to a large degree. Nevertheless, the action of God (God's grace) is not absolutely excluded from the natural life,⁷⁶ just as human action is not altogether excluded from the mystical stage.⁷⁷ This point will play an important role in the chapters both about the intellect and the will.

There remain two more points in which the threefold 'division' of the human soul shows itself. It is the question of knowledge and pleasure. The latter is easier and shorter to treat. On behalf of point c., pleasure, Teresa notes that there are two different kinds of pleasure: contentments (*contentos*) and delights (*gustos*). As she sees it, the former are related to the natural dwelling places and their source is a success (be it material, worldly or spiritual) grounded in man's own effort. On the contrary, the spiritual delights differ considerably from the former ones. Not only are they different in nature (the way of perceiving them and the *locus* where they are perceived), but the source is solely in God himself. As such they cannot be understood as a proper reward or recompense – they are (according to St Teresa's own words) a pure gift of God. Teresa leaves no doubt that these spiritual delights are stronger, more intensively felt and far more pleasing than the contentments. She also stresses that the spiritual delights have nothing in common either with the body or the bodily perception.⁷⁸

The distinction between the contentment and spiritual delights is again reflected also in the *Life*⁷⁹ and even in the *Meditations on the Song of Songs*⁸⁰ and the *Way of Perfection*.⁸¹ Although both in the seventh dwelling places of the *Interior Castle* and in the *Meditations* the possibility of the spiritual delight overflowing even into the body is mentioned, it needs to be said that this cannot be understood as contradicting the previous statement, that the spiritual delights are for St Teresa unlike the bodily consolations. The reason is simple, the source of the spiritual delights is in God and they are first and foremost perceived and enjoyed in the soul generally and in the intellect particularly. St Teresa seems rather to be suggesting that under special circumstances the body may have a share in those spiritual delights which are of a different quality than the bodily consolations.

Even more interesting is that she speaks in the *Meditations* and in the *Way of Perfection* about the spiritual delights being experienced and enjoyed in the faculty of the will.⁸² Although this is not explicitly mentioned in the *Interior Castle*, the truth is, that the faculty of the will comes to the fore in the larger, mystical part of the *Interior Castle*. In the end, the enjoyment of the 'mystical union' seems to be experienced through the will as this union is depicted as the union of wills of both God and man.

The last point (d.) is the question of knowledge which will be treated more thoroughly in a separate chapter (six). At this point it is enough to state that St Teresa refers to two kinds of knowledge. One is the natural and the second is super-natural (or mystical) knowledge. These are also connected to two slightly different powers of the soul. The former is reached through discursive thought (*pensamiento*, reason), whereas the second is gained (or received) through the intellect

76 This is especially shown in the second dwelling places where St. Teresa stresses that without God's Grace, help and support man would not be able to withhold both the urge of his still strong passions and desires for 'the world', but neither would be able to withstand the onslaught of various temptations.

77 The 'human activity' in the purely mystical dwelling places seems to be restricted to the continuously renewed determination to 'do the will of God' and renunciation of one's own will. This theme can be traced throughout all the fifth to seventh dwelling places.

78 The reason for distinguishing both, see M 3,2,10; 4,1,4–5; 4,2,2–4.

79 M 5,14, 1–6; 15,1.

80 MC 2,22; 4,2; 4,7; 7,1; 7,6.

81 CV 31,3; 31,10.

82 MC 4,2; CV 31,10.

and consists rather in an intellectual insight given by God than by human effort. Thus, the first is prevalent in the first three dwelling places, whereas the second is in the last three dwelling places. In the fourth dwelling places these two kinds of knowledge intermingle. From one point of view it seems that both kinds of knowledge also intermingle in the seventh dwelling place, although on the other there is an obvious difference between the two chambers. Whereas the text of the *Interior Castle* suggests that in the fourth dwelling places natural knowledge may be from time to time pierced by a flash of supernatural knowledge, in the seventh dwelling place the special union of both is reached.

2.5. PARALLELS TO THE TEACHING OF THE INTERIOR CASTLE IN OTHER MAJOR WORKS

The first encounter with Teresa's teaching on the soul has up to now been limited to her teaching contained in the *Interior Castle*. This approach was chosen for its relative clarity. However, I am convinced that Teresa's teaching on the soul and the spiritual life has been fairly coherent throughout the scope of her works, though there are exceptions. One of the major differences is that the *Interior Castle* is the only work where she treats the mystical marriage. Also, it seems that she is clearer on behalf of the kinds of prayer, especially the prayer of quiet, in the *Interior Castle* than she was in the *Life*.

In any case, in this part, I would like to show the parallels between the major works, especially the parallels between the teaching of the *Interior Castle* and the *Life*. I suggest looking at the topics that are in the focus of various sections of chapters of the *Life* and compare them to the topics of individual dwelling places. Now, the *Life* is (due to its character) not obviously divided into any sections. However, there is the symbol of the 'four waters' and various chapters are connected to one of these 'ways of getting water' with the exception of the first nine chapters telling 'the real story' of Teresa's childhood. Even this section can actually be understood as a part of the spiritual autobiography. A. Weber doubts the *Life* has any 'autobiographical' character at all.

The text [the *Life*] is clearly nonautobiographical in the sense that Teresa lacks a modern autobiographical motive – the desire to have others observe her uniqueness as an individual; hers is a document produced in response to an order from her confessor to describe her suspect practice of mental prayer and defend the authenticity of the spiritual favors received through it. But although the confessors' command to write marks her text as a religious/legal confession [...] As Antonio Gómex-Moriana has noted, frequently a general confession written at the order of the confessor also served as a preliminary statement by the accused in Inquisitorial trials.⁸³

If the *Life* is read from the perspective of the *Interior Castle* as described above the structure of the *Life* emerges. Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that these two books differ both in style and in length, so it is not surprising that the compared sections of both texts are not altogether equal.

First of all, the symbol of the 'four waters' is used and explained for the first time in the eleventh chapter. Before that, in the first eight chapters, Teresa describes not only the early stages of her bodily life but also the first stage of her spiritual life, which was up to the time of adolescence practically non-existent. She definitively observed the faith in a very ordinary way but she also made an attempt to stress her lack of enthusiasm, real faith, leniency, even a few hazardous moments. The description, although lengthier than that of the *Interior Castle*, matches quite well the state of life of the carnal, worldly people living in the courtyards of the castle. Teresa herself tries hard to emphasise all the worldly pleasures she sought during those years culminating in her first conversion, when she was acquainted with prayer and started to take her spiritual life more seriously. Such a conversion is what moves one to 'enter the castle' and to start with the life of prayer.

Chapters nine and ten speak immediately about her *second conversion* and the decision to put all trust in our Lord and give oneself totally to Him. This giving up of one's self goes hand in hand

83 A. Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of femininity*, p. 43 and footnote no. 4.

with the gradual detachment from everything worldly. Just before describing the symbol of the four waters, Teresa states ‘the greatest labour is in the beginning because it is the beginner who works while the Lord gives the increase’.⁸⁴ This necessary labour is depicted by the symbol of the first water – drawing water from the well by manual labour. But this is what she says about the first three dwelling places: man must struggle during the first stage of the spiritual life. Also remarkable is that she describes the important decision in the third dwelling places which is explained by the parable of the rich young man. Yet, in the third dwelling places just as in the ninth and tenth chapter of the *Life*, the decision that opens up the way to more mystical stages of the interior life rests in giving up everything for God. The eleventh to thirteenth chapters of the *Life* provide a more full account of what it means, according to Teresa, to rid oneself of everything than that which is provided in the *Interior Castle*, where the explanation is rather scarce. However, in both accounts she makes a great effort to stress that such renunciation does not entail only giving up one’s wealth and status and entering the convent. She tries to explain that such renunciation goes ever deeper down to the point of giving up one’s own will for the sake of accepting the will of God.

Chapters fourteen and fifteen of the *Life* are concerned with the *second way* of gaining the water with the help of the water wheel and/or aqueducts. This way is less arduous, although even now one has to strive by himself. The prayer of quiet is treated for the first time as a kind of prayer typical for this stage. Teresa also (for the first time in the *Life*) draws the distinction between the bodily consolations and spiritual delights just as she does in the fourth dwelling places of the *Interior Castle*. Moreover, the fourth dwelling places are also the first stage where the prayer of quiet is mentioned. Also, I have already mentioned above that the fourth dwelling places are some kind of intermediary stage where both man and God are active in promoting one’s spiritual life: where man must strive a lot and yet God already pulls one forward. The increase of the determination of the will is mentioned in both works.

Chapters sixteen and seventeen of the *Life* deal with the third way of gaining the water which is described as ‘water flowing from the river or spring’ quite freely. She assumes that in this stage it is the Lord who practically becomes the gardener, that is, the one who makes all the effort to promote the growth of the soul upon his own shoulders. Just as the symbol suggests, one cannot do anything by his own efforts, however, his desire to acquire a complete glory rises. In this stage Teresa speaks about the sleep of the faculties, the union of the faculties and the complete abandonment of one’s self into the hands of God. Such topics can also be found in the fifth dwelling places, although this time it is the *Interior Castle* which goes into more subtleties speaking about the beginning of intimate union with God in lofty images borrowed from the *Song of Songs* or using the famous symbol of the silk worm turning into the little white butterfly (this time it is not abandonment into the hands of Christ, but abandonment into ‘Christ the cocoon’).

The chapters treating the fourth way of gaining water described as a rain or drizzle sustaining the whole garden (the soul) from above constitute the longest part of the *Life*. As St Teresa hadn’t yet reached the final union of mystical marriage while writing this work, she deemed this stage to be the last and most perfect one. In this respect, the *Interior Castle* overtakes the *Life* and what in the *Life* is considered the final stage, in the *Interior Castle* is only the pre-final stage of the sixth dwelling places. Interestingly, the sixth dwelling places also constitute the longest part of the *Interior Castle*. This does not exhaust the similitude between both works. The *Life* provides an account of various mystical experiences remarkably recalling the list of mystical experiences described in the sixth dwelling places. Thus, from chapter eighteen to the end of the book locutions, rapture, elevation, flight of the spirit (sometimes called ‘transport’) and visions, both imaginative and intellectual ones, appear. Even the ‘perception of Christ’s presence’, transverberation and ‘impulses’ proceeding from God are mentioned.

There seems to be, however, one important difference between the *Interior Castle* and the *Life*.

84 M 5,11,5.

Whereas in the *Interior Castle* Teresa describes individual experiences and or types of prayer as leading towards more intimate union, and actually each of the fifth, sixth and seventh dwelling places are characterised as a 'state of union' with different degree of perfection, in the *Life* it is not so. There she treats the 'union' as one kind of prayer and even as a prayer of lesser degree than rapture and vision. This does not necessarily discredit the theses that there are many parallels between both texts as it is possible to argue that just as she had not yet reached the final union, she had not received the full knowledge of the possibilities of the spiritual life and so perhaps did not perceive the subtle difference so clearly.

T. Dicken disagrees with this view and provides a lengthy argument. Paradoxically, he thereby also confirms my reading of the parallels between the mansions and the 'four waters', although indirectly. He confirms it by repeatedly stating that many English commentators are in accord with my own reading. Sadly, he does not provide sufficient links and, except one, does not name any. The one named there is A. Poulain. T. Dicken does not find A. Poulain's analysis of the primary texts sufficient and is convinced that it does not work due to the scope of Teresa's works. He himself tries to identify the fourth water already with the fifth mansion on the assumption that the fourth water is identical with the union and since it is already possible to speak about the union in the fifth dwelling places, he concludes, that the 'division' of the four waters should be marked differently.⁸⁵

However, despite the fact that A. Poulain would support my own conclusion provided above, I disagree both with A. Poulain and T. Dicken for identical reasons. Both of them try to identify each 'type of water' with one, specific kind of prayer, be it 'the union' or the 'ecstasy'. Nevertheless, Teresa does not use either the symbol of the water or the mansions for any specific kind of prayer but rather for the 'way of grace' in the former case and the state of the soul in the latter case.

Now, it would be possible to argue that in such a case even my own conclusion fails, for the 'grace of God' and the 'state of the soul' are two distinct realities. That is certainly true, although one should not forget that the symbols cannot be treated in the same way as the notions are. It is fairly possible that in this case the symbols intermingle in an unexpected way.

In the *Life*, Teresa describes various stages of the interior life and differentiates them mainly by the way the grace of God is given to the soul in each of them. This gift of grace is symbolised by one way of gaining water. However, this symbol only aims at showing that in the initial stages man must strive a lot by his own efforts whereas in the subsequent stages God gives the soul his grace without the need of strenuous work on the part of man. Nevertheless, the respective way of 'getting the water' is dependent on the 'state of the soul' and this state of the soul is further characterised by a certain type(s) of prayer. Hence, Teresa's enumeration of kinds of prayer and various spiritual experiences connected to them. But this is exactly what she does in the *Interior Castle*, although the initial symbol differs.

Now, to identify one kind of 'water' or dwelling place with one type of prayer is not accurate as the type of prayer or union is, given by the state of the soul, symbolised either by the dwelling place or by the way one receives grace given by God. Therefore, Teresa primarily aims at hinting towards the spiritual *state of the soul*, which gives rise to a certain type(s) of prayer, whereas both T. Dicken and A. Poulain identify the symbolic expression with the *type of prayer* itself. Moreover, Teresa in her dealing with the mystical chambers stresses several times that the mere absence of *apprehensible marks* of mystical experiences (especially of the union) does not necessarily mean the absence of these *experiences themselves*. That is to say, that man may be united (irrespective of the grade of union) to God without having any mystical experiences or undergoing peculiar events (e.g., levitation).

The *Way of Perfection* and the *Meditations on the Song of Songs* are two works different in character as their main focus is prayer itself and not so much a life of the soul. Even in these two

85 T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, pp. 412–416. A. Poulain is cited there as well.

works, however, there are several important points marking the spiritual progress which can also be found in the two major works. They also put the emphasis on the renunciation of one's will and the necessity of giving God everything, in the end leading to the courtship between the soul and God. Teresa also distinguishes the bodily consolations and spiritual delights and uses the symbol of Martha and Mary.⁸⁶ In one respect she goes further than in the *Interior Castle*. There she merely hints at or gradually leads the reader to assume that the ultimate surrender to the will of God rests simply in the renunciation of one's own will. In the *Way of Perfection* she elaborates this topic more thoroughly, stating this need explicitly and at the same time acknowledging that to give one's own will is the most difficult thing to do. In the same breath she also shows that the perfection of the surrender of one's will is the gauge of the perfection of love towards God, because 'He doesn't give himself completely until we give ourselves completely.'⁸⁷ In the fourth chapter of this work, she explains that three things are really necessary to proceed in the spiritual life, namely love for another (God and neighbour), detachment from all created things, and true humility.⁸⁸ Upon reading the whole text through the prism of these three points, it is possible to conclude that she explains the mutual relationship or gradualness between all the three points. First, the absolute necessity to diverge one's sight from the world and each worldly care is eloquently explained, so that one might gain true humility consisting in the renunciation of everything (specifically, one's own will) and in this manner gain true love.⁸⁹

In these steps the classical division of the interior life into the three stages is mirrored. Thus, to rid oneself of everything can be understood as *via purgativa* – the stage of being purified of attachment to the things and realities (relationships) of this ephemeral world for the sake of attachment to that which is eternal (God). Such renunciation leads to the illuminative stage (*via illuminativa*) during which man gains the true knowledge that the whole of his life depends upon God, which in turn is the cause of humility in man. Only humility opens up the door towards the third stage, namely the *via unitiva*, characterised by a gradual increase of mutual love between God and the soul symbolically expressed in terms of human relationship (courtship through engagement to matrimony). This is, however, the same progress of the spiritual life as is depicted in the *Interior Castle*. The difference is that the *Interior Castle* is, in comparison both to *Life* and to the *Way of Perfection*, much more systematic and subtle in drawing various distinction only hinted at in the other texts.

In the *Way of Perfection*, Teresa further makes two interesting remarks. First, she recognises that there is an 'extremely rich place', a palace where the High King dwells seated upon an 'extremely valuable throne which is our heart.'⁹⁰ Second, 'I understood well that I had a soul. But what this soul deserved and who dwelled within it I did not understand because I have covered my eyes with the vanities of the world.'⁹¹ So, not only do we find a brief inspiration which became later, with a symbolic frame, the whole *Interior Castle* but also the possibility of not even having the knowledge of the existence of the soul and blindness caused by the world. Later, this becomes symbolically expressed by the black cloth in the *Interior Castle*. Whereas in the *Way of Perfection* this blindness is treated under the general term 'the world',⁹² in the latter work it is more specifically 'sin', especially 'grave sin'.⁹³

86 Cf. CV; MC 2,27 (abandonment of one's will); 3,1 (union of one's will with the will of God); 4,2, 4,7, 7,1, 7,6 (joys of this world, spiritual delights).

87 CV 27,12.

88 Ibid., 4,4.

89 Ibid., 2,1–3,8, ch. 8–9, 13,6–13,7, 23,2–3, 28,12 for the renunciation of everything worldly and one's own will; 3,9 for the expression of uttermost humility ('Have mercy on this little sinner. '), 10,1, 10, 5, 12, 1–2, 15,1; 16,2 for the intimate connection between humility and love, 17,6; 4,5–7,4 for 'love'.

90 Ibid., 28,9.

91 Ibid., 28,11.

92 Cf. *ibid.*, especially chapters 2–3.

93 Cf. M 1,2,3.

2.6. SUMMARY: PROBLEMS OF THE SYMBOL

The symbol of the castle provides the reader with a useful structure that is easily followed. It also incites the imagination – one can readily imagine himself walking through the concentric circles of seven dwelling places. Nevertheless, it also bears a certain disadvantage. This consists in the inclination to solely spatial understanding of the symbol. The reader tends to visualise the spiritual journey as something that takes place, as a journey where there is something in front to be reached and something left behind. Although there definitely is something to be reached (i.e., union with God), it cannot be understood as being ‘in front’ but in the sense that it has not been accomplished – or still better to say – actualised yet.

The spiritual adventure should be understood as the gradual actualisation of originally only latent possibilities of the human soul. When there is something which is actualised and which at the same time presents a basis for further actualisation, it cannot regress into potentiality without hindering the further actualisation. This also means that once a person has accomplished ‘the goal’ of the dwelling places corresponding to the stage of his spiritual development, he has actualised or ‘activated’ this ‘layer’ of the soul. What this actualisation consists of is the next question.

It seems that there always has to be some cause and some purpose of the actualisation of certain possibilities. Whereas in the natural world it is possible to discern and follow the rule of causality on which man is quite often able to predict the outcome, this process can hardly be applied to human beings. This is because the human beings are not only alive (and as such have the source of movement and action in themselves) but they also have free volition (*liberum arbitrium*). Thus, they are able to act or not to act according to their momentary desires and impulses. This is why, in the case of human beings, the cause of certain actions has to be in the intellect and the will, both of which closely cooperate in reaching a free decision (this does not apply to purely physiological changes upon which the man through his will and intellect has no influence, such as change of skin colour caused by the weather). The will, as St Thomas shows⁹⁴ in detail, always follows the good but in itself is incapable of discerning what the good consists in. This is the reason why the will is so closely related to the intellect. It is the intellect that gains knowledge and discerns certain realities as good. It also sets this good to the will as the end to be followed. The actualisation then consists in reaching this end. T. Dicken summarises this well:

It should be also noted that the will does not act independently of the understanding, for although it requires a general act of the will to direct our attention to any object, the further action of the will depends upon the rational evaluation of the object by the understanding.⁹⁵

This should be applied to the suggestion that it is inappropriate to speak about leaving something behind upon entering the next dwelling places, that is, the next level of spiritual development. This discussion was ended by the claim that the spiritual journey should be understood in terms of the subsequent actualisation of the gradually deepening ‘strata’ of the soul. In the previous paragraph I have hinted that the actualisation of certain realities pertaining to a human being is dependent on free volition, respectively the intellect and its setting something in front of the will as the good to be followed. There seems to be another important point in the process and that is the choice to follow or not to follow the object set before it as a good.⁹⁶

In the previous parts of this chapter, it was shown that for St Teresa there exist two crucial points of choice each with a respective end of its own, which is known, perceived and accepted as good. The first choice comes before even entering the castle. It consists in the choice not to follow bodily whims but to start to live spiritually. Its respective end was shown as the well-ordered life of a good Christian, although ‘only’ a natural one. The second crucial point comes in the third dwelling

⁹⁴ Cf. ST I, q. 82–83; ST Iallæ, q. 3-17; QDV q. 22; *In Sent* II, d. 24, d. 25; *De Malo* VI; K. O’Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing*.

⁹⁵ T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, p. 333.

⁹⁶ Therefrom the possibility of sin arises.

places. This choice consisted in the renunciation of everything one has and its end is the mystical union with God, the supernatural life.

Therefore, it seems that the 'actualisation' in the first stage consists in the actualisation of the well-ordered life, whereas in the second stage it consists in actualisation of the supernatural life. However, it also seems this actualisation is gradual (hence, the seven dwelling places). The supernatural life cannot be actualised unless the natural life has been fully actualised first. If the end of the first stage of spiritual life is a well-ordered life, then it seems that also these powers of the soul need be ordered first (to make them work according to their nature and submit them to reason).

The last point that I hope I have shown that Teresa's basic ideas about the nature of the soul are very much in accord with Aquinas's views of the powers of the soul. There is the topic of the fundamental union of the body and soul which Aquinas defends but Teresa simply presupposes. Also, there are the inner senses of the sensual memory and fantasy. Reading Teresa's text shows a close resemblance to what Aquinas deems them to be. True, Teresa does not mention the rest of the inner senses. Nevertheless, her basic division into the 'inferior' and 'superior' part of the soul corresponds to Aquinas's division into the 'lower' and 'higher' powers of the soul. Also, Teresa's discretion between the reason (ratio) and the intellect matches Aquinas's teaching on the same matter.

3. Activity of the Soul and the Three Stages of Spiritual Life

If the previous chapter asked the question about the ‘static element’ of the symbol of the castle, this chapter, on the contrary, asks the question about the ‘dynamic element’ of the symbol, about the ‘journey through’ the castle. It was shown that to imagine this ‘journey’ as a linear procession from one point to another is quite misleading. This journey should rather be understood as a gradual actualisation of the soul’s full potential. After treating the short history of this classical division of the three stages of the interior life and mentioning St Thomas’s turn in this teaching, I would like to ask whether Teresa’s own account matches rather the classical concept or the concept of St Thomas. To gain even deeper understanding of this topic, I rely heavily on the *Three Ages of the Interior Life* of R. Garrigou-Lagrange.

The previous part also showed that in relation to the activity of the soul, the division of the interior life corresponds to the natural-supernatural dichotomy with the mixed stage of the fourth dwelling places in between. Since the first three dwelling places are in some respect connected to the bodily, material existence, whereas the last three dwelling places are connected solely to the immaterial intellectual part of the soul, it seems that the transitive fourth dwelling places also constitute some kind of a borderline between both the material and the immaterial existence of man, between the body and the intellectual part of the soul. Teresa surprisingly calls this part a ‘heart’.

Although T. Dicken thinks that the division of the interior life into these three stages is less clear in Teresa’s works due to her ‘lack of interest’ and a ‘certain ambiguity about her concept of the union’,¹ it seem to me that the very description of these dwelling places provided by the saint matches the classical division of the spiritual life into the three stages – purgative, illuminative and unitive. The preliminary hypothesis that will be treated in greater detail further is that the purgative way corresponds to the first three dwelling places, the natural ones; the illuminative way regards the fourth, the intermediary dwelling places; and the unitive corresponds to the last three dwelling places with the gradually built union between God and the soul.

The graduality of the interior life can also be detected in the *Life’s* symbol of the four waters. I have already shown in the previous chapter that the four waters might be matched with the symbol of the dwelling places of the *Interior Castle* with the exception of the seventh dwelling place, even though many commentators would disagree with such a claim.

3.1. SOURCES OF THE TEACHING ON THE THREE STAGES OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

The Church’s teaching on the three ages of the interior life seems to have been present since the early stage of its history. Thus, Basil of Caesarea in his *Regulae fusius tractatae* already distinguishes three stages of man’s relationship to God – that of a slave who acts in favour of his Master out of fear; that of a ‘hireling’ who seeks an opportunity to gain future benefits; and at last, those who are like sons of God, looking for God and serving Him for His own sake.² The same categories were recognised also by Gregory of Nazianus.³ John Cassian used these terms also in connection to the fear of hell, hope for the kingdom of heaven and love both of good itself and virtue. The love of the sons of God was also connected to trust and confidence in the goodness and generosity of

1 T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, p. 407.

2 Basil of Caesarea, *Regulae fusius tractatae* (PG 31: 895 329B).

3 Gregory of Nazianus, *Oration 40, On Baptism* (PG 34: 373).

the Father.⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux further explained that the first two stages (that of the slave and the hireling) seek only one's own profit, work for themselves, whereas the perfect, the sons, do not seek their own but the Other for His own sake.⁵

Aquinas tended to see the three-fold spiritual development in terms of filial love – true, at first, such love is very much imperfect and fearful but it is love nonetheless and it is this love that directs man forwards to increasing union with God, to increasing knowledge of Him.⁶ This notion is also echoed by R. Garrigou-Lagrange, who also sees the love of the beginner to be the motor of his spiritual progress. The generous love is, according to him, paired with the holy fear of sin leading one to a three-fold mortification of the concupiscence of the flesh, the eyes, and pride.⁷

Interestingly, this also seems to be the notion of St Teresa. There are three distinguishable stages of the spiritual life both in the *Interior Castle* and the *Life*, as has been shown in the previous chapter. In this chapter on the 'activity' of the soul, these two texts can be further supported by the *Way of Perfection*, work focused on the topic of prayer.

In the fourth chapter, St Teresa enumerates three things necessary for progress in prayer, and hence also of the spiritual life. These are, first, love for the Other; second, detachment from all created things; and third, true humility.⁸ Although she does not mention these points at the very beginning of this work and despite the lack of a 'systematic approach', one may realise that these three points represent the stages of the spiritual life and not only in name but also in the 'progress' of the text itself.

Teresa pays special heed to the 'detachment from all the created things'. This is her starting point and she explains in detail what she thinks this 'detachment' includes. Further, she treats the 'humility' and, at last, the 'love for the Other'. At this point, two things need be mentioned. First, since the *Way of Perfection* is a book first and foremost about prayer and the interior life, the order in which the individual stages of prayer and/or the progression of the interior life are described probably corresponds to the actual development of the spiritual life.

Hence, in the perspective of the *Way of Perfection*, the purgative way could be paired with 'detachment from everything created'. The illuminative way can be related to 'humility', since the illumination comes after the purgation and before the union, just as humility comes only after detachment from 'the world' and as a necessary condition for further union. The unitive way is further connected to 'love for the Other'.

Interestingly, in the fourth chapter of the *Way of Perfection*, she mentions 'love for the Other' as the first thing necessary, although further in the text she treats it as the very last thing reached, after the abandonment of everything worldly and after becoming humble. Although it may be understood as another example of her unsystematic approach, there also may be a different reason

4 'Tria sunt, inquit, quae faciunt homines a uituis temperare, id est aut metus gehennae siue praesentium legum aut spes atque desiderium regni caelorum aut affectus boni ipsius amorque uirtutum.' John Cassian, *Collationes* 11 (On Perfection) (PL 49: 852A). 'Si quis igitur ad perfectionem tendit, de illo primo timoris gradu quem proprie diximus esse seruile, de quo dicitur: cum omnia feceritis, dicite: quia servi inutiles sumus, ad altiore spei tramitem gradu proficiente conscendet, qui iam non seruo, sed mercenario comparatur, quia mercedem retributionis exspectat et quasi de peccatorum absoluteet poenali timore sucurus ac bonorum sibi operum conscius, licet placiti praemium uideatur expetere, tamen ad affectum illum filii, qui de paternae indulgentiae confidens, omnia quae patris sunt sua esse non ambigit, peruenire non potuit.' (PL 49: 853) It is noteworthy, that the *Collationes* of John Cassian belonged among St Teresa's favourite readings, as is clear from the CV 19,13. Endnote 10 of the English edition of her works states: 'Most Probably Teresa knew of this story from the *Vida de los Santos Padres* published in Zaragoza in 1511.' The same endnote continues with another important statement: 'She was very devoted to the *Conferences* of Cassian and of the Fathers of the Desert, and so when this witness [Petronila Bautista] was with her the Holy Mother asked her to read two or three accounts of those saints each day and at night and tell her about them since she herself didn't have time to do so because of her just and holy occupations.' *The Collected Works of Teresa of Avila*, vol. 2, endnote 10, p. 467.

5 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistola* 11,3; 11,8 (PL 182: 111; 182: 113). *De diligendo Dei* 12,34; 15, 39 (PL 182: 995; 182: 998).

6 I owe the idea of filial love as the main motive of each stage of the spiritual life in Aquinas to Michael Sherwin's lecture given at the conference called *Initiation and Mystagogy in Thomas Aquinas: Theological, Philosophical, Liturgical, and Pedagogical Perspectives*, held 13th–15th December in Thomas Instituut te Utrecht.

7 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of Interior Life*, Vol. 1, p. 319.

8 CV 4,4.

to begin the list with 'love for the Other'. Such a reason might be identical with the reasons of St Thomas, who deemed all three stages of the spiritual life to be motivated by 'love towards the Other'.⁹ By putting the 'love for the Other' to the very front, it is as if St Teresa echoed St Thomas: love for God is the source and reason for spiritual development, for a life of prayer, for the desire and striving to progress and to come closer to God.

It is love for God which motivates man to overcome all the horrors of the first two dwelling places of the *Interior Castle*, even if carried primarily by fear of damnation; it is the love for God which gives man courage (so often invoked and recalled by St Teresa) to take a decision to give God everything in the third dwelling places. Moreover, despite the strong temptations of the first two dwelling places, St Teresa does not provide any reason to suppose that the struggle to persevere and 'go forward' is motivated by fear. Rather, it seems she says that the fear of damnation and hell is there to *tempt* the soul from the spiritual way of life. If one perseveres, it is rather *despite* the fear and *not due to* it. Similarly, the transgression from the third to the fourth, from the natural to the supernatural is based on a decision to give God everything. As such it is connected to great fears and an immense need for courage. This does not resemble the 'hope for future reward' of the hireling either. Rather, both cases indicate the already existing love for the Other as the main motivation, even if such a love is as small as a mustard seed.

It is the love towards God which gives man courage to look at himself as he is, in all his poverty, and thus gain humility in the fourth dwelling places, even if it is the love of a 'hireling', motivated by hope in final salvation. It is love towards God which directs man to ever closer union with Him in the fifth, sixth and seventh dwelling places, the love of God for His own sake. Thus, love towards God can be found at the beginning of the spiritual life, during its progression as the driving force enabling man to persevere in spiritual combat at all costs and at the end, as the terminus, symbolised by the final mystical marriage between God and the soul.

In the previous chapter I have shown that both the *Interior Castle* and the *Life* follow a three-fold division. The individual stages were distinguished by the main agent in each of them into the natural, semi-natural and supernatural stages. Since the text of the *Way of Perfection* points clearly in the direction of the classical division into the three ages of the spiritual life, it is appropriate to put these two perspectives together.

Such a step shows that the purgative way corresponds to the 'natural' spiritual life in which the main promoter is man himself. Thus, the first stage, which is marked by the need to become detached from everything created in the *Way of Perfection*, corresponds to the first three dwelling places of the *Interior Castle* and the first ten or perhaps even eleven chapters of the *Life* characterised by the symbol of the 'first water'.

Similarly, the second stage, the illuminative one, connected to humility in the *Way of Perfection*, corresponds to the fourth dwelling places of the *Interior Castle*, the semi-natural ones which are characterised by the combined efforts of man and God to promote the spiritual life; this is chapters fourteen and fifteen of the *Life*, symbolised by the 'second water'.

Finally, the last stage, the unitive way, characterised by the 'love for the Other' in the *Way of Perfection*, corresponds to the fifth, sixth and seventh dwelling places of the *Interior Castle* showing the graduality of the union with God and chapters eighteen to forty-one of the *Life* symbolised by the 'fourth water'. Each stage of the spiritual life should be treated more thoroughly further on.

3.2. VIA PURGATIVA: DETACHMENT FROM ALL CREATED THINGS

Teresa began her *Life* by describing her originally worldly oriented attitude, which only slowly changed during her adolescence due to the good influence of another sister religious in the

⁹ Cf. ST IIaIIae, q. 24, a. 9; ST IIaIIae, q. 19, a. 4; Super Rom. 8,5; Super Io. 21,3. Aquinas speaks about beginners, proficient and the perfect rather than 'slaves-hirelings-sons'. Thus, he stresses that even beginners are motivated primarily by love for God. The 'beginners' are traditionally connected to the purgative way, the proficient to the illuminative way and the perfect to the unitive way.

Augustinian convent of Our Lady of Grace in Ávila, where she gained her further education after the death of her mother.¹⁰ This, together with her serious illness¹¹ and the timely good influence of her uncle, slowly led her to give precedence to the unseen reality over the material one; she renounced the wealthy and comfortable life provided by her father as well as good marriage expectations.¹² In a lively account of her first years, the reader is led to follow her steps from an early, strong, yet immature, somewhat naive love for God, through the teenage matter-of-fact attitude to religion, to young adult conversion.¹³ Interestingly, Teresa mentions the now often quoted incident of her early childhood, when she persuaded her older brother Rodrigo to go with her to fight the Moors.¹⁴ On the one hand, this incident can be taken as one of those sweet childish adventures. On the other hand, however, reading the *Life* not merely as an actual biography but rather as a treatise on spiritual life, as was suggested in the previous chapter, it is possible to see this episode as a depiction of the point made later on in the *Way of Perfection* that every spiritual striving begins with love, even if childish and immature at first, partially lost later in life when the worldly musings allure one to diverge his sight from God.

The real spiritual life starts, as Teresa made explicitly clear in the *Interior Castle*, with the beginning of the life of prayer, also referred to in her *Life* in the descriptions of her convent school years. The life of prayer leads one into the castle, into one's own soul and the first stages are described by renunciation of bodily pleasures, amusing games and monetary cares. This last point is extensively referred to also in her *Way of Perfection*, written primarily for her sisters. Since she insisted upon the reformed convents being run without any permanent income,¹⁵ her eloquent insistence that the sisters should not care about money made also a very strong appeal to their trust. She herself described (in the book of *Foundations*) several occasions of sparse material conditions – sometimes the sisters did not have anything to eat until some 'last minute' unlooked for help came.¹⁶ But Teresa wrote: 'Never look for sustenance through human schemes, for you will die of hunger. Have your eyes on your Spouse! He will sustain you. [...] Give up worry about food.'¹⁷ It is noteworthy that in this speech she addressed those who were already religious and that means those who already had renounced the world. Thus, it seems Teresa's understanding of what the renunciation means is much deeper than one would spontaneously understand it to be.

In the previous chapter it was shown that the first dwelling places symbolise man's striving against the most basic bodily passions and temptations, while the second one represents the need of purification of one's imagination and (sensual) memory. In the *Way of Perfection*, however, Teresa expresses something more fundamental which could at the same time be seen as the reason

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- 10 *Collected Works of St. Teresa of Ávila*, vol. 1, p. 3. For a more detailed account of her life in the monastery of Santa María de Gracia, see Efrén de la Madre de Dios-O. Steggink, *Tiempo y vida de Santa Teresa*, pp. 46–50. The nun was doña María Briceño.
- 11 She remained bedridden for almost three years and in the end also remained unconscious for so long that her relatives took her for dead. She woke up in the last minute. In the *Life* she also writes that she already had the treatment of wax scales on her eyes. Although there is an ongoing discussion about the nature of her illness and it is well known that she suffered multiple ailments whole her life and recent research has shown that the illness in question was probably a combination of brucellosis, meningoencephalitis and neuritis. She probably died of cancer of the uterus. Cf. *Collected Works of Teresa of Ávila*, vol. III, pp. 52–56; 76; Vol II, pp. 4–5. Efrén de la Madre de Dios, O. Stegging, *Tiempo y vida de Santa Teresa*, pp. 50, 59–62.
- 12 *Collected Works of St. Teresa of Ávila*, vol. 1, pp. 1–6. Efrén de la Madre de Dios, O. Stegging, *Tiempo y vida de Santa Teresa*, pp. 20–50. The book generally provides a lot of details from St Teresa's life.
- 13 The first conversion, see *Collected Works of St. Teresa of Ávila*, Vol I., pp. 2–3. Efrén de la Madre de Dios, O. Stegging, *Tiempo y vida de Santa Teresa*, pp. 49, 53, 58. T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, pp. 13.
- 14 *Collected Works of St. Teresa of Ávila*, vol. 1, p. 2; Vol. III, Chronology, p. 83. Efrén de la Madre de Dios, O. Stegging, *Tiempo y vida de Santa Teresa*, pp. 31–33.
- 15 In the end she was forced to accept some of her newly found monasteries being founded with an income. These were Malagón, Pastrana, Alba del Tormes, Beas, Caravaca, Villanueva de la Jarra and Soria. It seems that she yielded to the insistence and arguments of Domingo Báñez. *Collected Works of St. Teresa of Ávila*, Vol. III, pp. 32–42.
- 16 *The Book of Foundations* is full of remarkable stories of convents beings founded without money or lack of substantial furnishing, contrary to the will of locals. For an example of last moment help, see F 24,17; 25, 2–4. The whole of chapter 28 describes the foundation of the monastery in Villanueva de la Jarra, which was amazing from the beginning to the end.
- 17 'Jamás por artificios humanos pretendáis sustentarnos, que moriréis de hambre, y con razón. Los ojos en vuestro esposo; él os ha de sustentar [...] dejad el cuidado de la comida!' CV 2,1.

for this purification of the soul through renunciation of 'the world'. This fundamental perspective is the need to diverge one's focus from the world to the God; the necessity not to pay attention to the world itself, for the 'world' is not the final end of man, and thus it cannot fulfil man's desire for pleasure, although the pleasures it provides are more immediate and 'tangible'; it is 'the importance of trampling everything underfoot, of detachment from things that come to an end, attachment to the eternal things.'¹⁸

R. Garrigou-Lagrange sees this process as a gradual purification of one's sensuality leading man from the knowledge of God still dependent on sensible things to a different kind of knowledge, to the 'attachment to the eternal things', as Teresa would say. This process is seen as 'an organic development of the interior life which thus becomes more and more an intimate conversation of the soul, no longer only with itself but with God.'¹⁹

This detachment should not be done only exteriorly, but interiorly, which is the way, according to Teresa, of becoming truly poor in spirit. This includes putting aside all care about body, honour, reputation, success, attachment to relatives and particular friends (in fact to any creature) and ultimately attachment to one's own will. The latter is also a prevalent topic of the semi-mystical and mystical dwelling places of the *Interior Castle*, for 'He [God] doesn't give himself completely until we give ourselves completely.'²⁰

To give ourselves completely to God is what the invitation to a supernatural life consists in as has been shown. It was also said that these dwelling places can be seen as a peak of the natural spiritual life. The fourth dwelling places belong already, even though not completely, to the realm of the 'supernatural'. It was also mentioned that the first three – the natural – dwelling places relate to everything more or less connected to the bodily, sensory existence of man. The third dwelling places are characterised by the well-ordered Christian life seen as a 'natural' end of man's spiritual life dependent on his own spiritual striving. From the current point of view, they could also be understood as the peak or rather crowning of the *via purgativa*, as the end of purgation which only opens up the illuminative way.

Why it is so seems to be understandable only when one realises that the 'mystical dwelling places' (i.e. fifth to seventh) pertain solely to the intellect under its immaterial aspect. Moreover, if the fundamental idea is that one needs to diverge one's sight from 'the world' and rather focus on God, it means to turn from the 'natural' sight connected to the body and bodily perception to 'spiritual sight' which is and only can be a matter of the immaterial intellect and its perception of the spiritual reality. Indeed, Teresa describes some kind of 'spiritual perception' in her sixth dwelling places.

Taken from the perspective of man as a unity of body and (intellective) soul, it is possible to argue that unless man brings his bodiliness under his control, that is, unless his sensuality and passions are under the control of one's intellect and his will as the higher part of one's soul, man is not actually able to perceive the immaterial reality. In such a case, his intellect, through which such perception is only possible, is overcome by the sensible apprehensions. Thus, purgation is a fundamental step for the change of the perspective (from material to immaterial) and also for the way of intellection (from natural to supernatural knowledge). R. Garrigou-Lagrange speaks explicitly about the purification of the sensitive part and the intellectual part of the soul, both active and passive. The passive one marks the transition into the next, the illuminative stage.²¹

Interestingly, this has been a constant topic of the older spiritual and monastic literature from the time of the *Apothegmata* of the Desert Fathers, through the works contained in the *Philokalia*, Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*, John Cassian's *Conferences*, John Climacus's *Ladder of the Divine Ascent*, the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus to Aquinas, and more. Although Teresa did not know

18 CV 3,4; 6,9.

19 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of Interior Life*, Vol. 1, p. 321.

20 CV 28,12.

21 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of Interior Life*, vol. I, p. 315.

all of those works, she definitely knew, read and reread the *Apophtegmata*, *Moralia* and Cassian's *Conferences*.²² Further, she also was, without doubt, influenced by Thomistic thought.²³ This in turn was highly influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita as is clear from manifold mentions of his name throughout Aquinas's corpus. In this perspective, Teresa's own works fit in with much older monastic tradition.²⁴

This becomes even more interesting from the point of St Thomas's view of the hierarchy of being. Man stands at the top of material reality as its apex and lord over the creatures (cf. Gn 26–31).²⁵ But there also exists a hierarchy within man himself. The body belonging to material nature with everything pertaining to it (i.e., sensuality, passions, inner senses, etc.) constitute a 'lower part' of man, whereas the intellect with the will and memory constitute the 'higher part' precisely because of its immateriality and subsistence.²⁶ What is more, it is due to this immaterial intellective soul that man is enumerated also among the spiritual substances, as has been mentioned. Since it's intrinsic connection to the material body, the intellective soul stands on the lowest rank of the spiritual substances. In the train of thought I've been following, it also means that man's intellective soul is made knowable to the higher ranks of the spiritual substances but they are not made knowable to man unless helped from above by the 'light of God', by God's grace.²⁷

The important assumption at this stage is that the purgation of the bodily part of man is within the powers of man because it stands below the intellect in the hierarchy of being. On the contrary, the purgation of the intellect for the sake of seeing God is not within the powers of the human intellect itself, precisely because it stands on the lowest rank among the spiritual substances and as such is not capable of seeing (understanding) what is above itself without the help of the light of grace. Thus, the first stage of the spiritual life of man lies within man's powers but not the supernatural stage, that is, both the illuminative and the unitive way. T. Dicken concludes:

There comes a time, however, when God sees that a given person will make little further progress on the basis of what can be perceived by the senses. This point is reached when the Christian has arrived at or is nearing the maximum potential of his natural capacity to understand and to love, having given God all that he can give, be it little or much.²⁸

3.3. VIA ILLUMINATIVA: TRUE HUMILITY

Entering the illuminative stage, or the fourth dwelling places is, besides the conjoined activity of God and man, characterised by the second step mentioned in the *Way of Perfection*, and that is true humility. In the *Life*, Teresa mentions that this is the first stage in which the soul realises that it cannot reach the spiritual delights (*gustos*) by its own efforts and this is the basis for true humility – to recognise one's own insufficiency and the need for God's help. The *gustos*, deep interior and purely spiritual heights and delights are also mentioned in the fourth dwelling places of the *Interior Castle*. Besides being distinguished from the consolations (*contentos*), they are also said to be a means of 'expansion of the heart'. In the second chapter, she even equals spiritual delight

22 Just as she mentions Cassian's *Conferences* directly in the *Way of Perfection*, she also mentions St Gregory's *Moralia in Job* directly in V 5,8. Otherwise, it is known that she also read St Augustine's *Confessions* and the *Letters* of St Jerome. From the more recent works on the spiritual life the chief source of inspiration came from Osunas's *Terced Abecedario Espiritual*, Bernardino de Laredo's *Subida del Monte Si3n*, and *Vita Christi* by a 'Cartusian'. The author is nowadays known to have been Landulfo de Sajonia. Tom3s 3lvarez, *Cultura de mujer en el s. XVI: el caso de Santa Teresa de Jes3s* (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2006), pp. 61–79, 201–219, 241–249.

23 Cf. F. Martin, *Santa Teresa de Jes3s y la Orden de Predicadores*; Paulino Alvarez, *Santa Teresa y el P. Ba3ez*.

24 In fact, her fascination by the world of Egyptian monastic communities and supposedly original Carmelite order of life was a chief motivation of her reform. T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, pp. 320–324.

25 Thomas Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*; Cf. ST I, q. 96. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Homine Opificio* (PG 44 124–256). Simeon the New Theologian, *The Discourses* (NY: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 95.

26 SCG 3, cap. 16, n.2; ST I, q. 75–76; q. 81, a. 3; ST Iallae, q. 15; q. 85, a. 5; q. 89, a. 4; QDV q. 10, a.1; q. 22, a. 11.; q. 19, a. 1, ad 14; q. 25, a.1.

27 ST I, q. 115, a. 4.

28 T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, p. 121.

to divine wisdom as being not only its source but its very matter.²⁹

Further, St Teresa repeatedly calls for humility and explains that ‘true humility’ consists in a conviction that one does not deserve nor is entitled to such spiritual favours from the Lord, and further, it consists in a strong determination to serve the Lord without self-interest.³⁰ Humility shows itself also in the way one makes supplications – if he asks like a beggar before the king and patiently waits for God’s response, then he is truly humble.³¹ In the *Way of Perfection*, St Teresa broadens the explanation: ‘True humility consists very much in great readiness to be content with whatever the Lord may want to do with them and in always finding oneself unworthy to be called his servants.’³² Also, it means being detached from ill-judgements of us being manifest, for example, in remaining silent under false accusations. She also puts it into connection with love when stating: ‘There is no queen like humility for making the king surrender.’³³ R. Garrigou-Lagrange adds that such humility is interior and goes hand in hand with the purity of heart, recollection and prayer.³⁴

Nevertheless, the spiritual delights are not the purpose of the illuminative way, nor the end in themselves. Rather, they are given for a different purpose. Since another prominent topic of the fourth dwelling places is the will and its inclination towards God and love towards God, perhaps one might see the spiritual delights as means of increasing one’s love towards God and desire for Him. St Teresa also speaks about the ‘awakening of the will’. Among the ‘awakeners’ of the will she counts acts of love [towards God], praising God, rejoicing in God’s goodness, realisation that God is who He is and desiring God’s honour and glory as great ‘awakeners’ of the will.³⁵ Besides, the well-known and often cited exclamation ‘the important thing is not to think much but to love much’³⁶ can also be found there.

However, Teresa immediately after this proclamation of love points out that man does not know what ‘love’ really is. Immediately she explains that love consists in ‘desiring with strong determination to please God in everything.’³⁷

It is not only the notion of love which she finds insufficiently grasped but the knowing itself. Throughout the whole scope of the fourth dwelling places, she laments the insufficiency of man’s knowledge – ranging from self-knowledge and true end, to source of delight and to God himself. I think that this might be the reason why she puts – in the mystical dwelling places – so much emphasis on the will rather than the intellect. In the natural dwelling places, that is, in the purgative way, the intellect is the ‘leader’ of the spiritual life, or rather, the rational discursive thought, the *ratio*, whereas in the mystical stage beginning with the fourth dwelling places (the illuminative stage), the leader of the spiritual progress is the will. However, my assumption is that Teresa does not abandon ‘knowledge’ in favour of ‘love’, nor favour ‘knowledge’ over love in the purgative way. Just as in St Thomas the intellect and the will cannot be altogether separated but always cooperate in close manner, so also it is in the text of St Teresa. And just as St Thomas puts emphasis on one of them in dependence of the context and circumstances but by doing so does not exclude the other, so it is also with St Teresa.³⁸

29 ‘Que no es esto cosa que se puede antojar, porque por diligencias que hagamos no lo podemos adquirir, y en ello mismo se ve no ser de nuestro metal, sino de aquel purísimo oro de la sabiduría divina.’ M 4,2,6.

30 M 4,2,9–10.

31 ‘[...] Lo que habemos de hacer es pedir como pobres necesitados delante de un grande y rico emperador, y luego bajar los ojos y esperar con humildad.’ M 4,3,5.

32 ‘Miren que la verdadera humildad está mucho en estar muy prontos en contentarse con lo que el Señor quisiere hacer de ellos, y siempre hallarse indignos de llamarse sus siervos.’ CV 17,6.

33 *Ibid.*, 15,1; ‘No hay dama que así le haga rendir como la humildad.’ *Ibid.*, 16,2.

34 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of Interior Life*, vol. II, p. 31.

35 M 4,1,7.

36 ‘Para aprovechar mucho en este camino y subir a las moradas que deseamos, no está la cosa en pensar mucho, sino en amar mucho.’ *Ibid.*

37 ‘Quizá no sabemos qué es amar, y no me espantaré mucho; porque no está en el mayor gusto, sino en la mayor determinación de desear contentar en todo a Dios y procurar, en cuanto pudiéremos, no le ofender, y rogarle que vaya siempre adelante la honra y gloria de su Hijo y el aumento de la Iglesia Católica.’ M 4,1,7.

38 A separate part is dedicated to the close relation between the intellect and the will in St Thomas in chapter five.

Therefore, to read the above presented in such a way that the purgation in the first stage was a matter of gaining more knowledge about God without the necessity to love Him more with every step would be highly inaccurate. Rather, St Teresa wishes, in my opinion, to communicate something different. Since it was shown above that even the first stage of the spiritual life is borne by a very imperfect love towards God, it seems that the 'love' and therefore the will is not strong enough to move man closer towards his final end. However, man's reason is. Moreover, one cannot love what he does not know. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that in the first stage, the weak, only slowly increasing love towards God in the first stage cannot be strengthened by the will for man in this stage has not yet recognised God as his final and only true end. But such a knowledge is crucial for directing the will.

On the contrary in the subsequent mystical stages beginning with the illuminative way in the fourth dwelling places, the situation is different. Man has already come to know God as his final and only true end but has also reached the limit of his natural, rational abilities to know God. But, on the other hand, he has not lost his ability to love God more. St Teresa, therefore, speaks about those 'awakeners' of love. These, however, do not exclude the importance of the intellect nor the importance of the knowledge towards which she repeatedly returns even in the unitive way. Rather, she recognises the insufficiency of human knowledge based on discursive thought for understanding the lofty states the soul may be elevated to or the grandeurs and mysteries of God. Therefore, the knowledge and the intellect are rather important and indispensable for the spiritual life even in the mystical stages, only the mover is the will.

Although the fourth dwelling places can be seen as 'hybrid ones' in several respects, in one respect they are not. When I ask to which of the powers of the soul are the individual dwelling places connected, it is clear that from the third dwelling places Teresa speaks about the higher intellectual powers. Or to put it otherwise, the third dwelling places connected to ratio are ipso facto connected to the intellect and therefore also to the will. The connection to the will is made manifest in the crucial decision 'to give God everything'. With every other grade of dwelling places, the prominence of the intellect and will is all the more obvious, as was shown at the beginning of the previous chapter. Therefore, to postpone the question of knowledge altogether would not hold. First, the illumination relates to the intellect (νοῦς) of which the end is knowledge of the truth, as Aquinas explains, whereas love is connected to the will. If the mystical life was merely a question of 'loving much', then it would be more appropriate to speak about the *via desideria*. As it is not, there must be some other reason to name this stage *illuminativa*.

A minor or preliminary conclusion of mine is that the illuminative way (and therefore the mystical life of the soul) relates solely to the intellect, although it is carried forward by the will. The hypothesis which I hope to (dis)prove further on is this: just as entering the illuminative way (as explicated both in the *Interior Castle*, the *Life* and the *Way of Perfection*) is pre-conditioned by one's humility consisting in recognising one's insufficiency (to reach God and salvation) and the need of God's help by giving God 'a free hand' in his leading the person's soul, so the parallel effect is the recognition of insufficiency of an understanding of God based on a discursive thought. Since the intellect in this transitional stage is only to be illumined (hence the 'illuminative stage'), man is not yet able to receive and grasp the super-natural, mystical knowledge which comes in the unitive way. Nevertheless, as was stated before, one of the features of the fourth dwelling places is the beginning of supernatural experiences and already glimpses of supernatural knowledge. Therefore, this transitional stage is – as its name suggests – the stage during which the human intellect is gradually being illumined not by the world but by God himself. The intellect is becoming used to the 'uncreated light'.

However, due to the intellect's loss of the support of natural knowledge and not yet gaining the full support of the supernatural knowledge, T. Dicken connects this stage to the 'nights of the spirit'. Although the intellect is being slowly illumined it has not yet become used to this new stage

and therefore the light seems like an incomprehensible darkness. Dicken warns: ‘The immediate effect of the illuminative way is that it brings little but confusion and uncertainty to the soul. [...] It is, in truth, the darkest Way of the three, subjectively speaking.’³⁹ Teresa herself adds: ‘I don’t know why this is called the illuminative way’⁴⁰ for the same reason.

This creates a strange situation. Man, who has not abandoned the ways of God but on the contrary, has persevered in them, loses the help of his natural, discursive knowledge and has not yet reached the help of a ‘full’, mystical knowledge of God. Therefore, the only power of the soul which can help man to transgress this stage and lead man closer to God is the will. Moreover, in the *Way of Perfection*, St Teresa joins the spiritual delights with the will and further stresses that it is the will which needs be ‘put into the service of God’ by ‘doing the will of God’, which in turn means undergoing trials. This is, of course, the way of uniting one’s will to the will of God, it is the way of love.⁴¹

3.4. VIA UNITIVA: LOVE FOR THE OTHER

If one is strongly determined to persevere on this way of perfection (and strong determination is crucial, as Teresa stresses in her work of the same name), he may be allowed to enter the last stage of the spiritual life, that of the perfect. *Via unitiva*, as the Latin suggests, is the way of the adult, spiritually matured souls undergoing a process of gradual union with Christ reaching its apex in the mystical marriage. St Teresa distinguishes three subsequent steps in this process as was shown in the previous chapter: those one of the acquaintance, fiancée and spouse. Each of the steps is characterised by a closer union with Christ, by a more intimate knowledge of Him, by His sharing ever more in the riches of his own divine life with the soul, so that at last, the soul may have a share in the life of the Most Holy Trinity.

If the previous stage was marked by a stronger emphasis put on the will and loving God rather than knowing God, it is all the more true in this final stage. The gradual union is, according to St Teresa, carried on by the will. Even more, St Teresa makes it known that the union itself is the union of wills. Thus, she proclaims: ‘He doesn’t give himself completely until we give ourselves completely.’⁴²

In each of the chambers marking the individual stage of the union with God, there occurs something which deserves closer attention. In the fifth dwelling places there is the notorious change described by the symbol of the silkworm building its cocoon. In the sixth dwelling places, there is the question of ‘impulses proceeding from God into the soul’ and in the last dwelling place, there is the famous image of the reconciliation between Martha and Mary, the active and the contemplative life. However, this ‘reconciliation’ has, according to the texts of St Teresa, many more implications. It is reflected also in the reconciliation between the natural and the supernatural knowledge; between the natural and supernatural ‘apprehension’ and enjoyment of the Glory.

Since the ‘impulses proceeding from God’ will be treated in the chapter about knowledge, mystical knowledge respectively, and a separate chapter will be dedicated to the mystical marriage, I am going to treat only the ‘transformation of the silkworm into the little butterfly’ in this chapter. But before doing so I would like to raise a few more points.

This unitive stage of the spiritual life may be marked by the experience of the most fantastic

39 T. Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, p. 138.

40 ‘No sé yo bien por qué dicen «iluminativa»; entiendo que de los que van aprovechando.’ V 22,1.

41 Cf. CV. ‘Que aquí es señora y poderosa la voluntad.’ 31,10; [...] ‘Véolo y sé que pasa así [...] porque, como no responden en los servicios conforme a tan gran merced, con no tornar a aparejarse a recibirla, sino sacar al Señor de las manos la voluntad que ya tiene por suya.’ 31,12; ‘Querría preguntar a los que por temor no los piden de que luego se los han de dar, lo que dicen cuando suplican al Señor cumpla su voluntad en ellos, o es que lo dicen por decir lo que todos, mas no para hacerlo. Esto, hermanas, no sería bien. Mirad que parece aquí el buen Jesús nuestro embajador y que ha querido intervenir entre nosotros y su Padre, y no a poca costa suya; y no sería razón que lo que ofrece por nosotros dejásemos de hacerlo verdad, o no lo digamos.’ 32,3.

42 ‘Y como El no ha de forzar nuestra voluntad, toma lo que le damos, mas no se da a Sí del todo hasta que nos damos del todo.’ CV 28,12.

phenomena. However, it is also a stage of the most severe spiritual battle. Not until reaching the very final union can the soul enjoy the peace of Christ relatively continually. Even reaching the very final union with Christ does not exclude the possibility that the soul would lose everything. To withstand the temptations, possible occasions of sin, determination of the will is absolutely necessary for the man to endure in Christ until death. With this restriction in mind, the seventh dwelling place may be considered as a relatively permanent spiritual retreat. However, the previous dwelling places cannot. What is more, St Teresa eloquently explains that such spiritual battles are ‘moved’ into the interior of the soul. The description of such battles provided both in the *Interior Castle* and even more so in the *Spiritual Testimonies* is stunning. St Teresa explicates several times that such battles are much worse than the battles in the previous stages of the spiritual life, all the more so that they are not visible from the outside, that they are hard to explain and even harder to believe. She – again – struggles with the want of words in an attempt to transmit indescribable inner fear, anxieties, incertitude, doubts. ‘It seems to me that all the contempt and trials one can endure in life cannot be compared to these interior battles.’⁴³

It is almost as if these hard experiences formed a counterpart to those lofty ones. Upon reading St Teresa’s texts, people usually concentrate on the latter ones and tend to overlook the former ones. Yet, it may be that the situation is exactly the other way around. Perhaps, the inner spiritual hardships are that which is crucial whereas the lofty spiritual states are that which is less significant. After all, St Teresa speaks about the need of great courage and endurance in the mystical stages of spiritual life, whereas she also expresses her conviction that ecstasies and similar phenomena may or may not occur in the mystic.⁴⁴ That is to say that these mystical phenomena are omissible, whereas the hardships are not. Perhaps it could be concluded that the lofty mystical phenomena, if they are given, are given for the purpose of strengthening the soul so that man may be able to endure those spiritual battles.

The topic of the three ages of the interior life seen through the prism of the *Way of Perfection* shows that the aim of the purgative way is to be rid of attachment to the material world, the illuminative stage is seen as the means of gaining true humility, whereas this last stage, the unitive way, focuses (almost exclusively) on the love for the other, more specifically on the love for God. This appears in St Teresa’s emphasising the role of human will and love at the expense of knowing, but also in her use of imagery. Thus, she proceeds from the images of hiding and seeking, insufferable longing in the fifth dwelling places, to the marvels shown and promised, love intensified and passion for the Lord hardly to be endured in the sixth dwelling places, to a quiet repose of mutual giving and receiving, the constant ‘being together’ reached in the mystical marriage, which finally, although imperfectly, satisfies the passionate longing of the previous stage. Thus, ‘loving the Other’ seems also to be the fulfilment of one’s own desire.

3.4.1. SILKWORM

In the fifth dwelling places, there is found the famous image of the transmutation of the silkworm into the pretty, little butterfly. Since it is one of the images often evoked, it is worth citing it in full:

With regard to the nature of the union, I don’t believe I’d know how to say anything more. But when the souls to whom God grants these favours prepare themselves, there are many things to say about the Lord’s work in them. [...] To explain things better I want to use a useful comparison. [...] The worms nourish themselves on mulberry leaves until, [...] they settle on some twigs. There with their little mouths they themselves go about spinning the silk and making some thick little cocoons in which they enclose themselves. The silkworm which is fat and ugly, then dies, and a little white butterfly, which is very pretty, comes forth from the

43 M 4,1,12.; cf. M 4,3,10; 5,2,9–11; 5,2,14; 6,1,1; 6,1,3–9; 6,3,5; 6,7,2; 6,11,5–7; 6,11,9–11; The complete book of *Cuentas de Conciencia (Relationes)* can be seen as a description of such interior battles.

44 Cf. M 4,1,1; 4,1,7; 6,5,1; 6,5,5–6; 6,5,12; 6,11,11.

cocoon. [...] What reasonings could make us conclude that a thing so irrational as a worm or a bee could be so diligent in working for our benefit and with so much industriousness? And the poor little worm loses its life in the challenge.⁴⁵

I wish to quote the subsequent passage too but in order not to confuse the reader, it is necessary to say that St Teresa makes a few remarks on other matters and only afterwards slowly returns to the topic of the silkworm. In doing so she, however, first steps back a little and starts her further explanation at the point *preceding* the loss of life mentioned above.

This silkworm, then, starts to live when by the heat of the Holy Spirit it begins to benefit through the general help given to us all by God and through the remedies left by Him to His Church. [...] Once this silkworm is grown [...] it begins to spin the silk and build the house wherein it will die. I would like to point out here that the house is Christ. [...] His Majesty Himself [...] becomes the dwelling place we build for ourselves. It seems I'm saying that we can build up God and take Him away since I say that He is the dwelling place and we ourselves can build it so as to place ourselves in it. And, indeed, we can! Not that we can take God away or build Him up, but we can take away from ourselves and build up, as do these little silkworms.⁴⁶ For we will not have finished doing all that we can in this work when, to the little we do, which is nothing, God will unite Himself, with His greatness, and give it such high value that the Lord Himself, will become the reward of this work. Thus, since it was He who paid the highest price, His Majesty wants to join our little labours with the great ones He suffered so that all the work may become one.⁴⁷

Many commentators deal with the alteration happening in the soul and described by the image of the transformation of the caterpillar into the butterfly.⁴⁸ However, I do not, for I do not find it as important as the alteration of the seventh dwelling places. There are, nevertheless, other aspects of the image of the transmutation of the caterpillar into the butterfly that I find quite interesting,

45 'Cuanto a lo que es unión, no creo sabré decir más; mas cuando el alma a quien Dios hace estas mercedes se dispone, hay muchas cosas que decir de lo que el Señor obra en ellas [...] El pudo hacer semejante invención y cómo de una simiente [...] en comenzando a haber hoja en los morales, comienza esta simiente a vivir; [...] y con hojas de moral se crían, hasta que [...] les ponen unas ramillas y allí con las boquillas van de sí mismos hilando la seda y hacen unos capuchillos muy apretados adonde se encierran; y acaba este gusano que es grande y feo, y sale del mismo capucho una mariposica blanca, muy graciosa. [...] ¿Ni con qué razones pudiéramos sacar que una cosa tan sin razón como es un gusano y una abeja, sean tan diligentes en trabajar para nuestro provecho y con tanta industria, y el pobre gusanillo pierda la vida en la demanda?' M 5,2,1–2.

46 Now, if we read this sentence through the prism of her struggle to find suitable words, it seems obvious that in her attempt to express herself she suddenly realised that it could be taken as if she said that we can artificially make God or move Him towards our own end. In realising this, she quickly wanted to correct herself. 'Not that we can take God away or build Him up.' So, in her zeal and hurry, without any time to check what she had written before and without any chance to revise and rewrite and reshape and make the text smooth and perfect, she used all the tools she had at the time of writing and corrected herself immediately and thus created a slight difficulty for later readers. Therefore, showing understanding, we should try to grasp her meaning. She obviously does not wish to state that man has any power over God that would enable him to make God act as man wishes or even to make (to build) God for himself, as some private deity. Therefore, she must have had something different on her mind and it must be there for a different purpose. She makes an impression that 'the building of the cocoon' is rather like wrapping oneself in Christ.

47 'Entonces comienza a tener vida este gusano, cuando con el calor del Espíritu Santo se comienza a aprovechar del auxilio general que a todos nos da Dios y cuando comienza a aprovecharse de los remedios que dejó en su Iglesia [...] Pues crecido este gusano [...], comienza a labrar la seda y edificar la casa adonde ha de morir. Esta casa querría dar a entender aquí, que es Cristo. [...] Su Majestad mismo sea nuestra morada [...] labrándola nosotras. Parece que quiero decir que podemos quitar y poner en Dios, pues digo que El es la morada y la podemos nosotras fabricar para meternos en ella. Y ¡cómo si podemos!, no quitar de Dios ni poner, sino quitar de nosotros y poner, como hacen estos gusanitos; que no habremos acabado de hacer en esto todo lo que podemos, cuando este trabajillo, que no es nada, junte Dios con su grandeza y le dé tan gran valor que el mismo Señor sea el premio de esta obra. Y así como ha sido el que ha puesto la mayor costa, así quiere juntar nuestros trabajillos con los grandes que padeció Su Majestad y que todo sea una cosa.' M 5,2,3–5.

48 M. Frohlich is convinced that the soul transformed by union has an entirely new structure and new capacities. 'The new structure is a new likeness of God.' M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 208. The very text of the *Interior Castle* speaks contrary to such an understanding, for Teresa describes the nature of the soul at the beginning of the spiritual journey and at its end in the same way. E. Howells speaks about the mystical transformation as a real change of selfhood and, just like M. Frohlich, is convinced that it gives the soul a new structure which was not there before. E. Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, pp. 88–127. The problem is that these passages can be read as if the authors implored some kind of radical change (perhaps altering the nature of the soul). However, Teresa rather speaks about full realisation of the soul's nature.

especially in connection to the intellect and the will.

First, I would like to point out, that St Teresa speaks about the state before the wrapping in the cocoon as about the 'irrational worm', thereby touching upon the topic of the knowledge once again and more importantly indicating that the state of the worm, that is, of the soul, before becoming the 'little white butterfly' is irrational in contrast to its being 'rational' in the latter stage. In the previous chapter it was shown that the natural stage, the first three dwelling places, is also connected to the natural way of knowing dependent on sensual apprehension, abstraction and discursive thought. However, in these fifth dwelling places, such knowledge is treated as if it were a mere childish foolishness in contrast to the knowledge gained in the supernatural stage, in the mystical dwelling places.

Second, Teresa's insistence that the cocoon is Christ himself gives an impression that the soul should enwrap itself in Christ. St Teresa goes even further in her explanation and states that this enclosing one's soul in Christ is done by *taking from* one's self. I ask, however, how can man *take from himself* at the point when he had already given Christ everything before, at 'the end' of the third dwelling places?

It is necessary to realise that the first stage of the spiritual life was marked by ridding oneself of sin and sinful desires, and the second stage was marked by getting rid of everything man's in much broader sense and by stressing the importance of man's looking for the will of God. What remains there, then, to be given so that the soul might be enwrapped in Christ? It seems that the only remaining candidate is one's own will, the power of the soul that remained to be man's own to lead him closer to God. That is to say that man is asked to give the last and only means to promote his own spiritual life that seemingly remained with him. We can only imagine the dread that the soul in this stage experiences. We must realise that to give up even the power that has the ability to take us closer to our final goal also means to risk that nothing would remain. So, in a way, such a step should be understood in terms of trust, even ultimate, radical trust (remember the aforementioned anxieties of St Teresa and her repeated appeal to take up courage).

However, to decide to give God one's will and accept His is not the same as actually doing so. It seems to me that the will is such an intimate part of man (unlike sin), part of his very nature, one of his soul's powers, it should not surprise that giving God this power needs to be a gradual process, just as it is with ridding oneself of sin. This assumption is again supported by the graduality of the union and the increase in love, as has already been mentioned. Teresa clearly shows that to give one's own will does not lead man to nothingness or to a vacuum but it immediately brings Christ so close to the soul that He becomes the soul's abode.⁴⁹

But what does it consist in and why does she speak about the worm 'dying' and gaining new life? To search for the answer, it is necessary, according to my opinion, to see the question in a broader perspective. In this chapter, I've tried to show that St Teresa's notion of the soul, its spiritual progress respectively, can be divided into the natural, supernatural and transitory. I have also shown that this division corresponds to the classical division of the spiritual life into the three ages: the purgative, the illuminative and finally the unitive. I've also mentioned that this progress has some connection to the will and to the knowledge.

Now, with the contemporary question about the dying silkworm transformed into the white butterfly, it would be helpful to realise that this alteration is found in the fifth dwelling places, which are the first ones belonging to the unitive stage. Working from Teresa's imagery even further, we could see the slow growth of the silkworm to be the first stage (the purgative one, first to third dwelling places), the maturing of the worm as the second stage, the illuminative one, and lastly, this enwrapping into the cocoon as the first step of the unitive way. Moreover, the worm is for the sake of the butterfly and not vice versa. Also, when thinking about the natural world, no one would

⁴⁹ Mary Frohlich remarks, that 'the will has no direct role in bringing about union, but it does prepare for union by acts involving steadfast determination to seek only God'. M. Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 207.

hold that if the worm died before becoming the butterfly, it would have reached its maturity and the fullness of its nature, or its *telos* in the Aristotelian sense. In the light of the current discussion, it implies that the transformation from the worm into the butterfly is not a transformation from who the man is into someone different, but a transformation from *whom the man is not* into *whom he is*. In other words, and perhaps less confusing, it is to say that before reaching this unitive way, man is not truly himself, that he is himself only potentially, that man needs to *become* himself and he can do so only in becoming united to God. Thus, St Teresa by this image actually expresses the conviction that the true fulfilment of human nature can be reached only in the mystical, unitive age of one's spiritual life, in the final union with God as the very apex respectively. This notion, however, would mean that the true nature of a human person is *relational*, that man who is alone, independent man, cannot be wholly himself.

Since it was previously shown that the mystical stage of one's life is carried by the will and that means by love, and only by love can man be united to God, it follows that the relational nature of man rests in love.⁵⁰ Now, the whole process of the spiritual life should be therefore seen in terms of gradual actualisation of the soul's potentiality. T. Dicken understands it this way with reference to St Paul. He states that 'our human pleroma seems to be achieved when the total potential of the individual or the corporate entity is fully realised.'⁵¹ This can be – more specifically – understood as a gradual actualisation of one's ability to love, or more simply, as learning the ways of love. St Teresa seems to suggest that only through this process can man become fully man and fully himself – by loving God.

3.5. TWO IMPORTANT POINTS OF TRANSITION

So far, I have shown several different ways of the inner division of the symbol of the interior castle. Now I would like to point out two crucial points of transition. Both bear some resemblance to the other. The topic of these two points of transition reappears in the latter chapters of the thesis where their cruciality shows itself in a full light.

On the one hand, Teresa's division of the 'interior castle' is related precisely to this castle but not to the castle with the outer walls and courtyards. On the other hand, she does not ignore the existence of the immediate surroundings of the castle and demands that the spiritual journey through the castle begins by leaving the courtyard and entering the castle as has been stated several times already.

However, at this point, a change of perspective can help us to see it in a different light. If living in the courtyard is a symbol for a purely carnal way of life, then it means that the decision to enter the castle, the decision for the life of prayer, is primary and crucial. It constitutes the first point of transition and that is a transition from the non-spiritual way of life to the spiritual way of life.

The second crucial decision comes in the third dwelling places and that is the decision to abandon everything and radically follow the will of God. However, this decision equally represents the point of the second transition – from natural spiritual life into the supernatural spiritual life, or from the *via purgativa* into the *via illuminativa*.

50 G. Ahlgren recognises this relational character of human nature but understands it in a different manner. She is convinced that it is the union itself that causes this relational identity. Further, she also understands the unitive moments of these dwelling places to be already a share in the essence of God. Ahlgren's idea can be accepted but she is convinced that the 'centre of the soul' is being made into the 'very dwelling place of God' and the soul alike. The problem with this notion is that it does not take into account Teresa's own description of the soul provided at the beginning of the *Interior Castle*. Teresa explicitly states that the centre of the soul already is the seat of the Triune God. Cf. Gillian Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle*, pp. 63-71. Further, Ahlgren also treats the relational love between the soul and God and understands it as an erotic form of love. This cannot, however, be understood in the common sense of the word. She defines this it (with Rita Brock) as an 'intimacy through the subjective engagement of the whole self in the relationship'. G. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle*, p. 64, citing Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journey by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*, New York: Crossroad, 1988, p. 40.

51 Trueman Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, p. 306. Dicken himself refers to J. B. Lightfoot's *Commentary on Collosians*, where the concept of πλήρωμα is explained.

Both of these points of transition consist in a choice. Both are also marked by a renunciation of the previous way of life and the beginning of a new one. But to none of the new ways of life is man pushed, and neither does he come to it unawares – he has to choose it himself. Therefore, the choice is free.

In this perspective, it is possible, as I believe, to express the transition from one stage into the other in the terms of ‘love’ and conversion of love. The purgative way with the initial decision to turn away from ‘the world’ and turn towards God could be understood as the first conversion, a purgation from the love of the world, which proceeds in three subsequent steps finding its climax in the third dwelling places of the good, well-ordered Christian life lived in a ‘fear of God’ with considerable interest in God and that pertaining to Him, yet still reserved in a way. This also means that the love towards the world is considerably weakened yet has not disappeared altogether.

The decision to ‘give God everything’ and gaining true humility in the fourth dwelling places could be seen as a second conversion and in terms of love also as a purgation of self-love, for self-love is contradictory to humility.¹ Garrigou-Lagrange further treats the topic of this second conversion at the beginning of the part dedicated to the illuminative stage. Similar to what Teresa says, he sees a need for great courage, trust in God and a great spirit of faith. For him, the most remarkable effect of this second conversion is found on the epistemological level. It brings about a change from the state in which man directs his actions by relying almost exclusively on his own reason, judgement, natural knowledge and experience to a state in which man is able to distrust his own judgement, as Dicken vividly described, and let himself be led by the Holy Spirit.²

This relatively short stage opens up the unitive way. The enwrapping of one’s self in the cocoon of Christ, the gift of one’s own will seems to be the way of the true love for the Other, true filial love towards God, instead of the ‘inordinate self-love’.³ This time, it is not a matter of ridding oneself of anything but rather of gaining not only something but God himself, for God ‘doesn’t give Himself completely until we give ourselves completely’. So, the two points of transition do not mark only a different way of life, a conversion, but they also could be understood as two constitutive components of the spiritual life marking the alteration in the way man loves so that in the end he might gain true filial love towards God.

St Teresa’s notion of the three stages of the spiritual life can then be well understood in the terms of St Thomas – as the three stages of filial love towards God. In the *Way of Perfection*, one needs to be rid of the love towards ‘the world’ in the first stage (*via purgative*), then he needs to rid himself of love towards himself (*via illuminativa*) and only then is he capable of ‘love towards the other’, love towards God in the unitive way.

1 M. Frohlich understands the mystical transformation of the silkworm into the butterfly in the fifth dwelling places to be the very fulfilment of this conversion. Mary Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 196. Garrigou-Lagrange sees this second conversion as a profound entrance into the kingdom or divine intimacy. Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of Interior Life*, vol. II, p. 23.

2 Ibid., 27–28.

3 Ibid., p. 28.

4. Prayer: The Means of Directing the Spiritual Life towards the Final Union

The symbol of a castle is to be understood as a multi-dimensional and globe-like phenomenon. If from one perspective, it is the nature of the soul which comes to the fore, from another perspective it is the spiritual journey. Yet from another the three stages of the spiritual life are the focus while from a different angle it is the question of knowledge or the end of one's life. All of these perspectives, however, are intimately interconnected so when treating one of them one is really treating all of them, just as is the case with speaking about the soul itself. That is to say, one should not lose the perspective of the whole, even if he at a given time focuses on a certain aspect; in focusing on individual powers of the soul, man nevertheless makes a statement also about the soul itself.

After depicting the general idea about the nature of the soul and the spiritual life, it is now necessary to ask what the mover of the spiritual progress is, what enables man to 'walk along the castle'. The previous chapter spoke about the necessity of abandoning everything which is man's own, even one's will, and the importance of the decision to do so. Beyond these general features Teresa provides the reader with plenty of manifold descriptions of the spiritual life in the mystical stage. A change in the perspective enables us, as I believe, to make further, more general conclusions directed beyond those descriptions. Since the mystical union of the seventh dwelling place is understood as a union of the wills (human and divine). To reach such a union means, in other terms, accepting God's will. Man is able to do so only if he is able and willing to abandon his own will. The abandonment of one's own will for the sake of accepting the will of God are joined vessels but the acceptance of the divine will with the apex of the spiritual marriage is a gradual process as is shown in the symbol of the graduality of the union with God. Therefore the process of gradual acceptance of God's will is at the same time the process of *gradual abandonment* of one's own. But it also means that the mere decision of the third dwelling places, however fundamental and crucial, to give God everything, is not enough. Hence, the decision to abandon everything does not equal actually doing so.

If the abandonment of everything which is man's own is not reached suddenly and at once, then it also means that Teresa's explanation provided in the *Interior Castle*, the *Life* and most fully in the *Way of Perfection*, is itself incomplete and should be broadened. The points which she mentions explicitly should therefore be understood as examples which help the reader understand that the self-abandonment needed for the final union goes far beyond the monastic vows and entering the monastery. This notion explained in the previous chapter can be broadened even further.

To do so I wish to join together two perspectives which have been explained so far. First, the supernatural stage of spiritual life pertains solely to the intellect and the mystic often has some supernatural experiences. Second, both the illuminative and unitive stages represent gradual processes enabling man to abandon everything of his, while in the final union gaining everything divine. Now, in this setting I ask what self-abandonment means then. If a man desires ever to come closer to God even beyond the natural, it necessarily also means abandoning the realm of materiality and sensual apprehension for the sake of the realm of immaterial spirit. But that also necessarily leads to the abandonment of one's usual way of knowledge, orientation in reality and entering into the realm of knowledge which is not and cannot be bound to the senses. Yet, that is frightening and Teresa does not forget to remind the reader of this very fact as she repeats continually that this

mystical stage of human spiritual life indeed requires a lot of courage. In other words, abandoning everything known and familiar in fact means abandoning one's usual way of using his very intellect, the power of the soul which differentiates man from animal and so in a way forms the very structure of his own being. In this sense, the 'mystical transformation' depicted in the image of the silkworm could be taken as depicting the transformation of the intellect's apprehension.

The question of the mover or mediator of such a process is still in focus. Since the very 'entering into the castle' is marked and enabled, according to Teresa, by the beginning of a life of prayer and that she continually stresses the importance of prayer, indeed the necessity never to abandon it under any circumstances, it seems obvious that the 'mover of the spiritual life' is the prayer. Moreover, the topic of prayer is reflected in all of her works to a large extent.

4.1. KINDS OF PRAYER

Teresa does not diminish the importance of oral prayer and accepted it as a necessary and indispensable part of spiritual life. She barely pays it attention in her own works. Teresa rather concentrates on 'inner prayer'. This, according to her, includes meditation, mental prayer, contemplation, prayer of quiet and prayer of union. The task to characterise each type of prayer and distinguish it from the other types is truly one to be investigated.⁴ The fact that her commentators are generally not in accord does not help either.

In order to have at least some chance of providing a coherent interpretation, I wish to direct the reader's attention first to the *Way of Perfection* as it is this work which is more constrained on the 'technical' side of the question of prayer than the *Interior Castle*. Unlike this work, the former is shorter, more economical and more focused solely on prayer itself. It also provides more information on 'oral prayer' and is more systematic.⁵ The advantage of the *Interior Castle*, on the other hand, lies in that it puts prayer into the context both of the human soul and the whole spiritual life. It also gives more detailed descriptions of various manifestations of individual kinds of prayer and/or its degrees. However, due to its being this detailed, it is easier to lose track and grasp the relations both between the kinds of prayer and the relations to the respective stage of spiritual life. This is where the *Way of Perfection* becomes very useful, providing we read it through the prism of the structure of the spiritual life as described in the previous chapter.

The matter is slightly complicated because Teresa uses at least two respects to distinguish the kinds of prayer. The first is the distinction between 'outer' and 'inner' prayer. The former includes only 'vocal' prayer and its outer expressions. The latter includes all other kinds of prayer. 'Inner prayer' can be stratified even more. It is this division that can be related to various stages of spiritual life and also to various powers of the soul. However, it cannot be said that once man has progressed in his spiritual life, he loses the necessity of vocal prayer and can focus solely on the 'higher' types of prayer. According to Teresa, this is impossible. Vocal prayer, insufficient in itself, is indispensable, the necessary foundation of any other kind of prayer. To emphasise her point she demonstrates it with the 'Our Father'. Not only does she provide a mystical interpretation thereof, but she also shows that everything is present in this most basic and ordinary prayer, even the three

4 For more detailed analyses of the problems connected to Teresa's terminology concerning prayer, see T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, pp. 91–95.

5 I use the Valladolid version of the *Camino de Perfección*. The translation of the Valladolid version (CV) with some useful insertions from the Escorial text is contained in the English translations by Rodríguez-Kavanaugh. It is noteworthy that Teresa herself edited also the Valladolid version and gained for it a censor's approval from Fr García de Toledo. However, the contemporary edition of the *Obras Completas* (ed. T. Álvarez) contain the later, shorter and much more edited version of the text. The English translators comment aptly on the shorter version: '[...] Teresa thought, after a time, of having her book printed; but she felt the need of help for some careful editing. The unknown editor she commissioned entered unscrupulously into the delicate task. His polished text no longer bore many of the fascinating Teresian traits. She dutifully reviewed it, patiently cancelling and rewriting some of his excessive changes. [...] But since those acquainted with Teresa's unlabored, conversational style were unhappy with it, Fray Luis de León in his edition of Teresa's complete works chose the autograph of Valladolid as the text.' Teresa of Avila, *Collected Works*, vol.2, p. 34–35. T. Dicken provides more detailed analyses of both texts, see T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, pp. 82–85.

ages of the spiritual life, as Garrigou-Lagrange would say, and the final, mystical union.⁶

4.1.1. VOCAL PRAYER, MEDITATION, MENTAL PRAYER

Apart from vocal prayer, Teresa distinguishes mental prayer and meditation as distinct from contemplation, prayer of quiet and prayer of the union. Both the mental prayer and meditation seem to be reachable by man's own efforts. The former is a 'product' of man's deliberate and effortful attempt to 'think through' (with the necessary help of the Holy Spirit) various mysteries of the faith.⁷ Meditation thus entails concentration, intentionality, some kind of rational activity (although distinct from perhaps a philosophical meditation, as it may easily be connected to the emotions, memories, impressions, etc.), deliberation and progress from point A to point B (for example, not understanding certain words of Scripture to understanding them somewhat).⁸

The latter, mental prayer, is harder to characterise as Teresa herself is rather parsimonious and deals with this kind of mental prayer somewhat matter-of-factly. However, even so it is possible to trace several characteristics of this 'mental prayer'. First, she still counts it among the types of prayer reachable by man's own efforts. This also means, second, that man can (to a certain degree) learn it. Third, it seems to be less focused and less 'formalised' than meditation. She demonstrates this at the very beginning of her expositions on the 'Our Father' in the *Way of Perfections*. There she states:

Mental prayer consists of what was explained: being aware and knowing that we are speaking, with whom we are speaking, and who we ourselves are who dare to speak so much with so great a Lord. To think about this and other similar things, of how little we have served Him and how much we are obliged to serve Him, is mental prayer. Don't think it amounts to some other kind of gibberish, and don't let the name frighten you. To recite the Our Father or the Hail Mary or whatever prayer you wish is vocal prayer. But behold what poor music you produce when you do this without mental prayer.⁹

This excerpt suggests that mental prayer amounts to the 'awareness' both of the presence of God and of man himself being present, facing God. It could be joined with the realisation of one's unworthiness and the majestic power of the Creator. It seems that this mental prayer is what makes the real prayer of 'vocal prayer'. If the latter should be considered a prayer at all, it necessarily needs to be joined to the mental prayer. Otherwise, it is no more than a mere recitation of words. Teresa gives ample examples of the two being joined in the *Way of Perfection*:

I'm saying, mental and vocal prayer are joined.¹⁰ I shall always have to join mental prayer to vocal prayer.¹¹ You are right in saying that this vocal prayer is now in fact mental prayer. But I tell you that surely, I don't know how mental prayer can be separated from vocal prayer if the vocal prayer is to be recited well with an understanding of whom we are speaking to. It is even an obligation that we strive to pray with attention.¹² To recite the Our Father or the Hail Mary or whatever prayer you wish is vocal prayer. But behold what poor music you produce when you do this without mental prayer. Even the words will be poorly pronounced at times.¹³ Since I'm speaking only of how vocal prayer should be recited well, [...] we should see and be

6 CV 37,1; 42,5.

7 T. Dicken stresses Teresa's special devotion to the humanity of Christ as particularly important in her practice of meditation. T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 281.

8 Ibid., 16,3; 17,3; see also MC 5,3; M IV: 1,4; IV: 1,6; IV: 2,3; IV: 3,3; IV: 3,8; V: 2,2-3; VI: 7,7; VI: 7,10; note that T. Dicken enumerates the problems connected to Teresa's concept of 'meditation', since he sees it to be distinct from the usual usage of 'meditation'. Teresa was probably inspired by a technique of meditation taught by Peter of Alcántara. Dicken provides an interestingly detailed analysis: see T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, pp. 92–100. However, neither of his objections are in contrast with the characteristics provided in the main text.

9 CV 25,3.

10 CV 22,1.

11 CV 22,3.

12 CV 24,6.

13 CV 25,2.

present to the One with whom we speak without turning our backs on Him, for I don't think speaking with God while thinking of a thousand other vanities would amount to anything else but turning our backs on Him.¹⁴

In the *Interior Castle* her words are even harsher as she points out that vocal prayer without mental prayer is not prayer at all.

I don't mean to refer to mental more than vocal prayer, for since vocal prayer is prayer it must be accompanied by reflection. A prayer in which a person is not aware of whom he is speaking to, what he is asking, who it is who is asking and of whom, I do not call prayer however much the lips move. Sometimes it will be so without this reflection, provided that the soul has these reflections at other times. Nonetheless, anyone who has the habit of speaking before God's majesty as though he were speaking to a slave, without being careful to see how he is speaking, but saying whatever comes to his head and whatever he has learned from saying at other times, in my opinion is not praying.¹⁵

Although T. Dicken does not seem to have grasped the difference between vocal and mental prayer fully, for he overlooks Teresa's statements that mental prayer may also be a prolongation of the vocal prayer, he nevertheless mentions several important points. First, he warns against understanding vocal prayer as strictly the prayer said aloud but rather as a form of prayer during which set formulas are used no matter whether aloud or silently. Second, he sees the superiority of mental prayer over the vocal one. This is because the words are important only as much as they arouse our devotion towards God and are understood as tools appropriate to our bodily nature.¹⁶ P. Marie-Eugène adds that mental prayer needs to be aided by the 'movement of grace' in the soul, otherwise the prayer itself is dead. He also summarises the effects of mental prayer. The mental prayer fortifies the soul and 'fulfills with regard to charity the same role as the intellect with regard to the will; it precedes it, orientates it, and enlightens it at each step.' He is convinced that mental prayer is necessarily joined with the asceticism.¹⁷

4.1.2. PRAYER OF QUIET, PRAYER OF UNION, CONTEMPLATION

Vocal prayer, mental prayer and meditation belong to the rank of 'human prayers'. There are, however, also the prayers that could be called 'divine', meaning 'being given by God'. Those are prayers that cannot be learned no matter how much effort one makes. Teresa speaks about contemplation, 'prayer of quiet' and the 'prayer of union'. It should be noted that she distinguishes several sub-kinds of the 'prayer of union'. The basic distinguishing aspect is the question whether *all* or only *some* of the powers of the soul are united to God. Quite uncertain remains the question whether the 'prayer of the union' is only a kind of contemplation or whether it is something completely different. The same question also relates to the 'prayer of quiet'. I consider all of them to be sub-kinds of contemplation, but it is necessary to (dis)prove it further in the text.

Before proceeding to this inquiry, I would like to consider some general remarks on contemplation which Teresa makes in the *Way of Perfection*. 'Contemplation' is given (if given) by God. It usually goes hand in hand with the spiritual delights (*gustos*). Further, she calls the contemplatives the 'favoured children',¹⁸ albeit this favour means firstly and foremostly many crosses and internal struggles.¹⁹ Since contemplation is a gift, it is not necessary for salvation and so those

14 CV 29,5.

15 M 1,1,7.

16 T. Dicken, pp. 85–89.

17 P. Marie-Eugène, O.C.D., *I want to see God: A Practical Synthesis of Carmelite Spirituality*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: the FIDES, 1953, reprint by Notre Dame, ed. Christian Classics), pp. 52–53. It should be noted that the author understands 'mental prayer' in a much broader sense. He subsumes under it every kind of 'inner prayer'. Despite a lot of sublime proclamations his reasons to treat 'mental prayer' in this way are somewhat unconvincing as is shown in the main text. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 54–60.

18 CV 16,9.

19 CV 18.

who are not given the joys of contemplation should not despair but diligently fulfil the duties given by their way of life.²⁰ Although this is how things are, Teresa nevertheless insists that everyone is called to contemplation and everyone should desire it and strive for it as much as he is able. Since it is clear that man himself cannot achieve something which can only be given by God, ‘striving for contemplation’ on the part of man really means only opening oneself towards the possibility of being given this gift. This opening of oneself can be achieved by the fulfilment of several conditions.²¹ Teresa claims that the first and foremost of these is the preliminary determination of the will to proceed ever closer to God, preparing the very ground for prayer by the cultivation of virtues, humility, mortification and detachment.²² T. Dicken also highlights all of these conditions and adds, that it is ‘an “ordinary” way of spirituality, although often associated with “extraordinary” phenomena.’²³

There still seemingly remains a slight contradiction between a general call to contemplation and contemplation as a pure gift from God which may not be given. Teresa explains this in the twentieth chapter of the *Way of Perfection*:

It seems I contradicted in the previous chapter what I had said before. When I was consoling those who were not contemplatives, I said that the Lord had different paths by which to go to Him just as there are many dwelling places. [...] Since His Majesty has understood our weakness, [...] He did not say: ‘some come by this path, and others by another.’ Rather, His mercy was so great He excluded no one from striving to come to this fount of life to drink. [...] He calls us publicly, crying aloud. But since He is so good, He does not force us; on the contrary, in many ways He gives drink to those who wish to follow Him so that no one will go without consolation or die of thirst.²⁴

Since contemplation is the gift of God and man can ‘only’ make himself ready and worthy to receive it, there is no need for any special occasion or distinct time set apart for contemplation. Teresa explicitly states that man may receive contemplation even when he himself does not try more than to recite vocal prayer properly and devotedly. The givenness of the prayer of contemplation on the one hand means that man cannot really prevent it as long as he aims to pray, and on the other hand he cannot be prevented to contemplate by anyone else ‘from outside’.²⁵ With slight amusement Teresa states that all contemporary attempts of renowned theologians to prevent ‘the ordinary people’ from contemplation and order that laity and women should not strive after more than vocal prayers are in themselves futile, for they cannot be prevented.²⁶ She illustrates this – again – with the example of the Our Father and states that there are souls who are taken to the heights of contemplation precisely during their recitation of the very prayer given to the Church by Christ himself.²⁷

P. Marie-Eugène discerns this ‘supernatural contemplation’ from the purely ‘aesthetic’, philosophical and even theological one. ‘The supernatural contemplation penetrates even to divine Truth, has contact with God himself, the uncreated Light [...]’.²⁸ He also provides a brief summary of some possible definitions thereof, finally to choose the broadened definition of St Thomas as was created by the Carmelite theologians of Salamanca. The definition says that the contemplation is

20 CV 16,9–17,2; 18,1–5.

21 There is the exception of the cases of the actual grace when man can experience the state of contemplation even without fulfilling the above-mentioned conditions. This is due to God’s sovereignty. However, Teresa also marks that such exceptional occasions are always exceptional and have a different purpose, for example, conversion of the soul or keeping one on the way of prayer. CV 16,8.

22 CV 16,1–3; 17,1; 17,3–4; 20,3; 21,2; 23,2–4.

23 T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 118.

24 CV 20,1–2.

25 ‘All supernatural things are like that. That is why those to whom God grants this favour should not think anything of themselves, for they see it is a pure gift, which they cannot either bring or refuse.’ T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 388.

26 CV 21,1–4; 25,1.

27 CV 25.

28 P. Marie-Eugène, O.C.D., *I want to see God*, p. 466.

simplex intuitus Veritatis sub influx amoris, a simple gaze on truth, under the influence of love. P. Marie-Eugène adds: ‘Love is, then, the beginning and the end of contemplation; it fixes and simplifies the soul’s gaze; and it is from love that knowledge proceeds in supernatural contemplation.’²⁹ The contemplation becomes then the vehicle leading man to the ultimate union with God by ‘connaturality of love’.³⁰

Aquinas also understands contemplation to consist in the love of God, through which the soul becomes aflame to gaze on God’s beauty. The contemplative life terminates in delight and through this delight love becomes even more intense. In the answer to one of the objections, Aquinas states: ‘We are urged to the vision of the first principles, namely God, by love thereof.’³¹

At this point it seems clear that ‘contemplation’ is for Teresa a ‘super-structure’ of ‘human prayer’ which exalts human efforts and enables man to enjoy God’s presence in a way which differs substantially from any other experience or devotional sentiment springing in human nature.

There remains the question whether the prayer of quiet and the prayer of union are sub-types of contemplation or whether they are distinct kinds of prayer. To tackle this question is not easy, since all of Teresa’s works are particularly interested in prayer, and especially in the inner prayer given by God, which includes all of the prayers mentioned. For this reason, Teresa devotes a lot of space to describe each type of prayer. Thus, the answer cannot be found in a linear manner, nor can a singular citation be given which would prove this or that position without any doubt. Rather, I suggest, first, to compare the characteristics of each type of prayer across her works, and second, to take into account a few more features of inner prayer. Even so, the answer cannot claim to be more than a probable one directed by the rule of inner coherence both of those texts and of the thought behind them and a certain order which holds together as many elements as possible.

In an attempt to give the inquiry *some* order, I would like, first, to focus on the prayer of quiet³² and the prayer of union and their mutual relation. This, I hope, would make the clarification of their relation to contemplation easier. Both in the *Interior Castle* and in the *Way of Perfection*, the prayer of quiet is mentioned and treated *before* the prayer of union, as the first ‘type’ of inner prayer given by God. Concerning the prayer of union, Teresa shows in the *Interior Castle*, in a more intelligible way than she does in the former work, that this prayer can be partial or full. Moreover, the cases when one is given the partial or full union do not seem to be altogether random. The texts suggest that the partial union usually precedes the full one.³³ Thus, we can trace a certain ‘hierarchy’ or ‘sequence’ among the types of prayer. First it is the transition from the prayer reached by man’s own effort to the prayer of quiet and therefrom to the partial and subsequently to the prayer of full union (the condition that man can enjoy these kinds of prayer, provided God wills he does so, remains). Before complicating the exposition further, I wish to answer the question of ‘contemplation’.

In chapter thirty, before expounding the prayer of quiet, Teresa states:

If you wouldn’t say that I’m treating of contemplation, this petition would provide a good opportunity for speaking a little about the beginning of pure contemplation; those who

29 P. Marie-Eugène, O.C.D., *I want to see God*, pp. 458–459.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 466.

31 ‘Ad secundum dicendum quod ad ipsam visionem primi principii, scilicet Dei, incitat amor ipsius.’ ST IIaIIae, q. 180, a. 1, ad 2.

32 T. Dicken provides an analysis of the prayer of quiet by comparison to the same notion in St John of the Cross. However interesting and insightful this comparison is, my prevailing impression is that Dicken read Teresa’s text through the prism of the doctrine of St John of the Cross to a high degree, which led to him missing some individual features of her own thought. Cf. T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, pp. 274–276.

33 T. Dicken sees Teresa’s teaching on the prayer of union as obscure and ambiguous. Part of the problem may be that he concentrates too much on a detail and misses a greater picture, namely that unless man reaches the final, complete union of all the powers of the soul with God, the partial union always entails only some of the powers of the soul. The fact that in some instances the will enters the union while in others it may be the memory does not play such a crucial role. This partial union may be carried by mystical phenomena like trances or ecstasies, nevertheless these are to be understood rather as mediums of the partial union than the partial union itself. It seems Dicken does not make this distinction. Cf. T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, pp. 405, 407–418.

experience this prayer call it the prayer of quiet.³⁴

Further, she speaks about the relations between the prayer of quiet and the prayer of the partial union either of the intellect or the will. Finally, she concludes with the description of the prayer of the complete union of all the soul's faculties with God.³⁵ Just as in the case of the seventh dwelling place of the *Interior Castle*, she uses the symbolic expression of the reconciliation between Mary and Martha and she puts it into the direct link with contemplation. Thus, we read:

Because everything I have advised you about in this book is directed toward the complete gift of ourselves to the Creator, the surrender of our wills to His, and detachment from creatures [...]. For we are preparing ourselves that we may quickly reach the end of our journey and drink the living water from the fount we mentioned. Unless we give our wills entirely to the Lord so that in everything pertaining to us He might do what conforms with His will, we will never be allowed to drink from this fount. Drinking from it is **perfect contemplation**, that which you told me to write about.³⁶

Throughout both works, Teresa moves from the topic of some 'special' prayer to the topic of 'contemplation' with ease but in these two passages she draws, as I believe, a direct link between the latter and the former. It is, therefore, possible to conclude that 'contemplation' is a parent word, whereas the prayer of quiet and union are 'sub-types of contemplation'. Thus, I propose to conclude that 'contemplation' simply means 'inner prayer given by God'. Further, I will use the word 'contemplation' in this sense, especially for the sake of brevity.

In a way, this distinction of prayer corresponds to the division of the text of the *Way of Perfection*. First, Teresa distinguishes the outer and inner prayer; further, she distinguishes the inner prayer reachable and unreachable by man's own efforts; third, she distinguishes among various 'types' of inner prayer given by God. However useful this distinction is and will serve us to understand Teresa's thought on 'prayer', the matter seems to be a little more complicated upon careful reading of her texts.

There are places in the text where she puts a direct link also between the prayer of quiet and both basic types of the prayer of union. She does not seem to be considering them as synonymous; rather, it is as if one type accompanied another, as if the prayer of quiet was 'prolonged' or 'deepened into the 'prayer of union'. In a way, this resembles what happens with 'vocal and mental' prayer. Although the vocal prayer is the 'starting position', it can and should be accompanied by mental prayer. I think it possible to render the relation between the prayer of quiet and the prayer of union in a similar way: to think about the prayer of quiet as about the 'beginning of contemplation' as mentioned above, and about the prayer of union as its companion, in other (and possibly better) words the prayer of union can be understood as a deeper mode of the prayer of quiet. This is where I disagree with T. Dicken's analyses of Teresa's notion of the 'prayer of quiet'. He tries to read her texts through the much more technical vocabulary of St John of the Cross and to apply his notion to hers. Such an approach, however, results in a tendency to draw too strict boundaries between each type of prayer which I do not believe are there in Teresa's texts due to reasons above.³⁷ Actually, both the prayer of quiet and the prayer of union (partial and complete) can be seen as different modes of contemplation itself, expressing the closeness to God and the rate of union between the soul and its Lord.

Interestingly, Teresa makes another remark about the prayer of quiet which is worth taking into account. She states: 'In this prayer of quiet it seems that He wants it to work a little, although so

34 Ibid., 30,7.

35 Note that Aquinas mentions something very similar: 'Et hoc est quod secundo dicit, quod necessaria est uniformis convolutio intellectualium virtutum ipsius, ut scilicet, cessante discursu, figatur eius intuitus in contemplatione unius simplicis veritatis.' ST IIaIIae, q. 180, a. 6, ad 2.

36 CV 32,9 [emphasis mine].

37 Cf. T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 274–276.

gently that it almost doesn't feel its effort.³⁸ Although, it is seen as the beginning of the contemplation, and therefore it is a gift from God, it does not seem to be a 'pure' gift, since some effort is necessary on the part of the praying subject.

4.1.3. TYPES OF PRAYER AND THE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

This last remark leads us to a very interesting question of the correlation between the various types of prayer and the stages of the interior life.³⁹ With this question I wish to shift the attention back to the *Interior Castle*. As I have shown at the beginning of this chapter, prayer is the reason why Teresa wrote the whole book in the first place. It is also opens the castle, is the entrance into it, and it seems it is also the driving force and medium of spiritual progress. Just as the individual dwelling places are in a certain way closely related to the individual powers of the soul, there is a question whether individual types of prayer are not typical of individual dwelling places as it seems probable that there must exist some intimate link between the chambers and the types of prayer.⁴⁰ However, several problems immediately arise. First, Teresa uses more than one aspect of division both for the dwelling places and for the types of prayer. I do not think it is much of a problem provided one realises which aspects are comparable. Second, Teresa's symbol of the castle is multi-dimensional. Thus, she often expresses several different realities at the same time and it is the task of the commentator to find some way out of it and highlight it for the reader. This is also my aim.

First, Teresa speaks about the inferior and superior parts of the soul. The inferior part of the soul is in some aspect connected to the body and/or bodily perception, the ratio included. It is the inferior part of the soul which corresponds to the first three dwelling places: to the purgative way as the first stage of the spiritual life and which falls under the dominion of man and that which is reachable by his own efforts. It seems, therefore, for this stage, vocal prayer, meditation and mental prayer as those prayers that man himself can master, are typical. Albeit there always remains a possibility to experience some elevated forms of prayer and/or mystical phenomena during each and every stage of spiritual life (even when one is still an unbeliever), and Teresa would be first to approve of it, I suppose it is always necessary to understand it rather as an exceptional actual grace given for a specific purpose (e.g., conversion). Usually, we do not expect in the person who is beginning to learn how to pray the highest forms of contemplation, and neither do we expect a spiritually matured contemplative to pray only vocally.

In a similar way, the fourth dwelling places, called by Teresa 'the heart',⁴¹ correspond to the illuminative way of the proficient and are counted as the first stage of mystical life. It was also shown that the joined activity of man and God are typical for this stage. In *Life*, Teresa uses the symbol of the second water – man has to make at least a slight effort himself yet is already helped by God a lot and she puts it into the immediate relation with the 'prayer of quiet'.⁴² Now, compare this to the citation from Teresa provided above: we have to work a little in the prayer of quiet, although the soul may not necessarily be aware of its toil. Moreover, proceeding from Teresa's own texts, I have argued that the prayer of quiet is the first stage or mode of contemplation, 'opening the way' for the prayer of union in a similar way as the fourth dwelling places are the first mystical chambers opening into the chambers of union.⁴³ The fifth, sixth and seventh dwelling places are the

38 Ibid., 31,10.

39 T. Dicken provides an interesting chart on the correspondence between the stages of spiritual life and the types of prayer. Moreover, he includes also the correlation to the same topic in St John of the Cross. Since I am not completely in accord with Dickens's understanding of the 'prayer of quiet', I also do not hold the chart to be totally precise, yet it is useful. Cf. T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 293.

40 E. Howells does something similar. He also concentrates on the Interior Castle. However, he treats several types of prayer practically as synonymous and puts too much stress on what he understands to be a strong discontinuity between the 'natural' and 'supernatural'. Cf. E. Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, pp. 102.

41 CV 31,5; MC 7,3; M 7, 4.

42 V 14,1.

43 For the prayer of quiet as the beginning or first stage of contemplation (i.e., mystical prayer), compare V 15,15; CV 30,7; M 4,2.

chambers of gradual union with God. The gradual progress of the prayer of union, beginning with the partial union either of the will or of the intellect, copy to a large extent what Teresa says about the partial union of the soul with God in the fifth and the sixth dwelling places. The complete prayer of union, also called the perfect contemplation, converge with the seventh dwelling place of the mystical marriage, the complete union of the soul with God.⁴⁴ This finds its expression also in the use of the image of the reconciliation between Martha and Mary found both in the *Interior Castle* and the *Way of Perfection*.

Nevertheless, all of this also shows that the basic elements of Teresa's thought both on the spiritual life and on prayer had been present even before the composition of the *Interior Castle*, since many of the basic 'building blocks' can be traced already in the *Life*. The *Interior Castle* is subtler, a more detailed, matured version of a teaching that does not seem to have changed in its fundamental features, although Teresa admits the shift in her understanding of the mystical stage based on the later experience of the mystical marriage.

4.1.4. THE HABIT OF PRAYER: THE CONTROVERSY OF 'MOST' AND 'NOT MANY'

The correspondence between the types of prayer and the stage of the spiritual life now seems to be beyond doubt. However, there arises a slight controversy leading to another set of interesting questions. The fact that Teresa recognises the possibility of having the kind of prayer or spiritual experience beyond one's actual stage of spiritual life has already been mentioned. I have also mentioned that, according to Teresa, every person has the possibility of reaching even the ultimate union with God, but sadly only a few find the courage to 'give God everything' and enter the mystical stage of the spiritual life and come ever closer to God. However, the process of renunciation is a gradual one, therefore, the mere decision of the third dwelling places, however fundamental in itself, is not at the same time a deed fulfilled.

When talking about prayer, Teresa makes the whole thing a bit more complicated. In the fifth dwelling places, she states:

And although I have said 'some', there are indeed only a few who fail to enter this dwelling place of which I shall now speak. There are various degrees, and for that reason I say that most enter these places. But I believe that only a few will experience some of the things that I will say are in this room. Yet even if souls do no more than reach the door, God is being very merciful to them; although many are called few are chosen.⁴⁵

First, there is again reflected one thing: to 'be on a certain spiritual level' or to experience the contemplation does not necessarily go hand in hand with experiencing the breath-taking mystical phenomena like ecstasies or levitations. These *can* be experienced but are not, according to Teresa, substantial nor necessary manifestations thereof. That is why, I believe, she states that 'most enter these places' but only 'a few will experience some of those things'.

Second, there is the question of why she says that 'most enter these dwelling places' when she had stated before that only a few have the courage to proceed further. One possible answer is that 'the most' she has in mind simply means 'the most of those few'. This could be supported by several things. First, in many places, Teresa also states that there are only a few who would make it into

44 M. Frohlich treats this transition from the natural to the supernatural and tries to pair the 'types of prayer' to the individual dwelling places in a slightly different way. She also pays heed to distinguish the 'heart' as a supposed centre of the soul from the real 'centre of the soul'. She understands it, naturally, through the basic prism of her work, thus she pays attention to 'intentional consciousness', 'interiority' and 'mystical consciousness'. Although one cannot disagree with her analysis, she seems to overlook certain types of prayer in favour of others without any clear idea why she favoured the former and not the latter. Thus, the whole passage is not altogether convincing. Cf. M. Frohlich, *Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, pp. 196–199.

45 'Y aunque dije «algunas», bien pocas hay que no entren en esta morada que ahora diré. Hay más y menos, y a esta causa digo que son las más las que entran en ellas. En algunas cosas de las que aquí diré que hay en este aposento, bien creo que son pocas; mas aunque no sea sino llegar a la puerta, es harta misericordia la que las hace Dios; porque, puesto que son muchos los llamados, pocos son los escogidos.' M 5,1,2.

the very final chamber. Thus, it is possible to imagine a situation where a person would progress into the fourth or fifth dwelling places but not further (due to death or lack of courage, perseverance, etc.). Further, she says a very similar thing also about the fourth dwelling places where she needs to explain why she spent so much time writing about those chambers. Moreover, she does not find any security or definiteness in our present state of life and continually reminds her sisters not to count on their spiritual level or supposed sanctity but always to remind themselves that even the best can fall. Her warnings often resemble the icon of the *Ladder of divine Ascent* of St John Climacus.

The second possible answer to the initial dilemma of ‘a few’ and ‘many’ is a bit more interesting. Let us assume that by ‘the most’ she means an absolute majority, ‘most of the people who pray’, not ‘most of those few’. Does it mean Teresa became confused and found herself unintentionally in a contradiction? That may be so, of course, but there is another possibility.

Since Teresa uses the symbol of the castle as a symbol for the soul itself, the spiritual journey and prayer, the idea is that in certain instances she simply shifts the attention from one of the dimensions of the symbol to the other without explicitly saying so – from a description of the soul to a description of the given stage of spiritual life and its characteristic features to a description of the kind of prayer.

This leads to question whether the correspondence between the stage of spiritual life and the kind of prayer experienced is absolutely fixed. Since her saying that one may experience far more advanced forms of prayer than is his due spiritual level, it seems that the relation between the spiritual level and level of prayer *is not* a fixed one. Therefore, most people can experience some form of contemplation (be it a prayer of quiet or a prayer of union) without having reached the mystical stages of the spiritual life. Yet, on the other hand, Teresa gives an impression that there is some difference between those who have experienced some elevated forms of prayer not in accord with their spiritual maturity and those whose stage of spiritual life and the form of prayer go together, for she also states: ‘But I don’t think He gives much spiritual delight unless sometimes in order to invite souls by the sight of what takes place in the remaining dwelling places and so that they will prepare themselves to enter them.’⁴⁶

Perhaps it is possible to solve this riddle by borrowing the concept of ‘habit’ (Lat. *habitus*) from the teaching about the virtues. There are several reasons that could justify this step. First, in the opening chapters of the *Interior Castle* Teresa puts the virtues into direct connection with prayer. She sees the exercise of virtues as the *necessary* condition of prayer and throughout the texts she reminds the readers of the supreme importance of humility as the mother of all other virtues.⁴⁷ T. Dicken notices that prayer and the practice of virtue just like every other part of Christian life (e.g., the sacraments) create a complex fabric and neither of the elements can be understood apart from the other.⁴⁸ Teresa, besides the virtue of humility, also repeatedly stresses the importance both of the virtue of perseverance and courage. Perseverance enables one to remain on the spiritual journey to the final end and courage enables man to face the dreads of such a journey (including inner trials).⁴⁹

Further, Teresa insists on persevering and to keep praying no matter what. This is eloquently described in her *Life*.⁵⁰ In the *Interior Castle*, she also insists that prayer must be continual.⁵¹ Apart from that, when describing the first two dwelling places, Teresa shows that prayer is especially

46 M 3,2,9.

47 P. Marie-Eugène stresses this intimate connection between prayer and the virtues. P. Marie-Eugène, O.C.D., *I want to see God*, p. 171. Apart from humility, he also enumerates the courage, perseverance and magnanimity, see *ibid.*, pp. 173-179.

48 T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 81.

49 CV 16; 17,4; 18,7; 21,7; 28,9; 41,4; 41,9.

50 In V 7 Teresa describes how she had abandoned prayer for more than a year and gradually shows that to abandon prayer was the worst idea she had and insists on praying always.

51 The whole book is one long plea for continual prayer, although she does not explicitly say so. She does, however, state it in CV 7,6.

hard to master in these stages and one has to deliberately and repeatedly decide himself to persevere in prayer. Thus, Teresa claims that one cannot pray continually without gradually learning to do so; man cannot pray continually by simply deciding so just as one cannot become good by simply deciding to be good. The preliminary decision is without doubt an important one, but in itself it does not suffice. One needs to prove it by 'his deeds'.⁵² This means perseverance and courage are needed also for prayer, so that man would persevere to pray despite the periods of aridity, lack of any 'experience', lack of satisfaction and delight or 'nights of the spirit'; one also needs courage to withstand the fits of temptations both outer and inner, the periods of inner trials far surpassing anything that could come to man from 'the world', the courage to face one's self.⁵³

Further, not only is there Teresa's insistence that vocal prayer can hardly be without mental prayer or even contemplation but she also suggests that contemplation can hardly be without oral prayer, since she chose to explain the heights of contemplation upon the *Our Father* and she also reminds her sisters of the importance of choral prayer. 'To be a contemplative', therefore, does not excuse one from the routine of deliberate, daily vocal prayers, from the *opus Dei*, as St Benedict names the *Divine office* in his *Rule*.⁵⁴

If, therefore, the very foundation of the practice of prayer in general and contemplation in particular is the practice of virtues, it also seems probable that the gaining of '*habitus*' in good (i.e., living a virtuous life) is closely connected to the faithfulness of one's rule of prayer. In such an instance it seems possible to ask whether prayer itself is not a kind of habit too.

Unceasing prayer is not interrupted even during the sleep as the example of many of those who have experienced such a state show. Now, if that is so, then prayer must be some special kind of the operation of the soul that is not necessarily conscious.

Moreover, the descriptions of the final union between the soul and God, the 'reconciliation of Martha and Mary', point to a certain conclusion. Teresa writes that after reaching this union, the contemplating soul is not hindered from her contemplation even during fulfilling her everyday (and very much mundane) tasks. But contemplation is the highest form of prayer. Therefore, it is another way of saying that man can pray continually during every activity he is involved in.

Since the final union is not reached but at the 'end' of the spiritual journey which entails a perseverance in suffering both outer and inner, it also seems obvious that the 'state of continual prayer' reached with the final union cannot be acquired without practice and constant inclination of the soul to its final end, which is God, or under a different aspect, to the final Good. Since both the intellect and the will of man are by their very nature disposed to many things, they need the help of 'habits'. These help to direct man's powers of the soul to their appropriate term, which is God.

To grasp the notion of prayer as a habit more fully, I wish to redirect attention to the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas on the habits as contained in the *Summa Theologiae*. Note that Aquinas himself does not in *ST IIaIIae*, q. 83 consider prayer to be some kind of *habitus*, since, unlike *habitus*, prayer is not for him an act of any appetitive power, but an act of the intellect. However, he raises only one argument in favour of his position and it is rather weak, since it proceeds from the concept of prayer as the 'outer or inner word'. For Teresa, prayer is much more than words (even the inner ones) and some of the mystical kinds of prayer can hardly be considered as an act of the intellect, let us say ecstasy, or the prayer of a partial/complete union since they may happen in spite of the 'outer' turbulent activity of the intellect. T. Dicken says: '[Prayer] is not a matter of technique, nor is there any formula or rigid set of exercises by which prayer can be learnt. It

52 'Muchos son los llamados y pocos los escogidos.' V 3,1.

53 In the fourth dwelling places, Teresa explicitly states: 'Nor should it be understood that if God grants this favor [i.e. prayer of quiet] once or twice to a soul all these good effects will be caused. It must persevere in receiving them, for in this perseverance lies all our good.' M IV:3,9.

54 Cf. Benedictus Nursinus, *Regula*, 43 [PL 66, 675–676]. For the centrality of prayer in the life of the Carmelites, see P. Marie-Eugène, O.C.D., *I want to see God*, pp. 51–52. The intimate connection between vocal prayer and 'mental prayer' (which the author understands in a broader sense of 'inner prayer') is also stressed, p. 52.

depends entirely on the disposition of the one who prays and on the grace of God.⁵⁵ However, I do not wish to state that prayer is not an act of the intellect either, for in some respect it surely is. P. Marie-Eugène affirms this, stating: ‘The prayer of simplicity [any mystical prayer] is the fruit of higher and finer forms of the activity of the intellect.’⁵⁶

I rather wish to show that prayer is not an act of the intellect exclusively, but it is also an act of the will and as such may be considered to be a ‘habit’, as P. Marie-Eugène underlines by his preferable *salamanticences* definition of contemplation as the ‘simple gaze on truth, under the influence of love’.⁵⁷ I would argue that, due to the intimate relation between the intellect and the will as held by Aquinas, we can also discern the ‘act of the intellect’ and the ‘act of the will’ in the one and the same prayer without dissolving prayer’s unity. Moreover, it was shown that in the ‘natural’ stage of the spiritual life, prayer is a human activity, whereas in the mystical stage, it is love towards God, love as an act of the will, that plays an increasingly more important role, according to Teresa. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that during the ‘natural’ spiritual stage, prayer is dominantly the act of the intellect, whereas in the supernatural stage, it is dominantly the act of the will. Neither case, however, excludes the act of the ‘other’ power from the realm of prayer completely, just as the intellect and the will are never really separated from each other.

This is further supported by Aquinas’s question on contemplation. Unlike the question about prayer, this one puts contemplation in connection with the will, for its intention is the contemplation of the truth, but the intention is the act of the will. Further in the same question, Aquinas even distinguishes what I have suggested above, although he does so only in that pertaining to contemplation itself. According to him, we can speak about contemplation as an act of the intellect, providing we have in mind the *essence* of the action. On the other hand, as regards the *motive*, and therefore also the cause of the action, then the contemplation is an act of the will.⁵⁸ There is no reason, however, not to treat *any* kind of prayer in this way.

To show that it is reasonable to treat prayer as a kind of habit of the soul, we should start with Aquinas’s definition of the habit: ‘It is a disposition whereby that which is disposed, is well or ill disposed either in regard to itself, that is to its nature, or in regard to something else, that is to the end.’⁵⁹ Now, the nature to which the habit is related is human nature, respectively the human intellectual soul for the habits of the body are treated elsewhere and are not of interest for our inquiry. The end towards which the habit is directed is to be understood as the term of the generation appropriate to the given nature. But the end of human nature is the Ultimate Good, God himself. Further, Aquinas explains that habit has always some relation to the very nature of the subject and at the same time ‘to operation, inasmuch as this is the end of nature, or conducive to the end.’⁶⁰ Thus, there are two aspects in which it is possible to consider the habits – either as related to the nature of the subject (i.e., the soul) or to its operation (operation of the soul). Since the human person is due to his higher intellectual powers capable of being directed to many things, those intellectual powers need something to help them be directed towards the good understood as the fulfilment of man’s nature, and these are called habits and are necessary so that the powers be determined to good, as Aquinas concludes.⁶¹

Now, since man may be disposed both to good and to bad, he can obtain a good or bad habit. But Aquinas teaches that the nature of the will of man is such that the will necessarily follows the good apprehended. Since man can have appropriate or mistaken knowledge of what is good for

55 T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 80.

56 P. Marie-Eugène, O.C.D., *I want to see God*, p. 304.

57 P. Marie-Eugène, O.C.D., *I want to see God*, pp. 458ff.

58 ST IIaIIae, q. 180, a. 1, co.

59 ‘Unde et in V Metaphys. dicitur in definitione habitus, quod est dispositio secundum quam bene vel male disponitur dispositum aut secundum se, idest secundum suam naturam, aut ad aliud, idest in ordine ad finem.’ ST IaIIae, q. 49, a. 3.

60 ‘Unde habitus non solum importat ordinem ad ipsam naturam rei, sed etiam consequenter ad operationem, in quantum est finis naturae, vel perducens ad finem.’ Ibid.

61 ST IaIIae, q. 49, a. 4 co.; a. 4, ad.2; a.4, ad 3.

him, he can follow either those things which are in accord with his very nature, i.e., those things which help him follow his ultimate end, God; or he is mistaken in his apprehension and follows those things which are not in accord with his nature. Those things which in fact are not in accord with one's nature need to be apprehended as good, even if only under a certain respect, to be willed and followed. This may easily lead to man's acting in such a way that does not correspond to his very nature. In such a case, his behaviour creates a bad habit, whereas the former behaviour creates a good habit. Habits are such acts which help man to acquire either one or the other. Habit is, Aquinas concludes, obtained by many like acts, not just by a single one,⁶² just as a prayer life is improved effectively by many 'acts of prayer', ultimately leading to reaching a state of continual prayer. This is what one should aim at in his spiritual life, as Teresa teaches.

T. Dicken adds: 'Prayer, like any other relationship, must develop continually from the most tentative beginnings to the most profound intimacy. It will not become perfect in a day, nor will its growth be in any sense mechanical.'⁶³

In a similar way, Teresa further teaches that prayer is a kind of operation of the soul, which relates both to the nature of its subject, that is, the soul, and to the operation of its powers as conductive to its end, i.e., the ultimate union with God. Since the decision to begin a life of prayer is intrinsically connected to the decision to divert one's attention from 'the world' and direct it to 'God' instead, it is to say that prayer is an operation of the soul which is related to the will in order to make the will focused on its only, true, final end, the Ultimate Good. Therefore, prayer is the activity of the soul which, along with the virtues, strengthens the will in its operation whereby its end is sought. Therefore, prayer is intrinsically connected to the will, as is also explicated by Teresa. This can be found both in the necessity of the decision for prayer, and even more in the mystical dwelling places. From the fourth dwelling places onwards, the will gradually gains in importance and Teresa stresses its primacy in the life of prayer, at the expense of the intellect. But 'in the will we must admit the presence of a habit whereby it is well disposed to its act. Moreover, from the very nature of habit, it is clear that it is principally related to the will; inasmuch as habit *is that which one uses when one wills*, as stated above.'⁶⁴

Aquinas stresses his point even further in his response to the third objection:

The will from the very nature of the power is inclined to the good of the reason. But because this good is varied in many ways, the will needs to be inclined, by means of a habit, to some fixed good of the reason, in order that action may follow more promptly.⁶⁵

Now, from the previous passage it is clear that the notion of prayer corresponds to the notion of the habit. In the next step, I think it possible to take the correspondence between prayer and habit a little further. Aquinas does not speak only about the habits, but actually distinguishes disposition, habit and the virtue. The distinction is not to be found in a diverse species of all three of them but the terms rather denote a different mode, or intensity, of the disposition. The soul is, due to its nature and its operation, disposed to some end. Following such an end may be strengthened by an inclination of the higher powers of the soul towards it. The inclination can be relatively easily lost. If the acts inclining the powers of the soul to their end are repeated sufficiently enough, the inclination becomes rather fixed and harder to lose. Such a fixed inclination is then called 'a habit'. The virtue, then, presents the highest degree of the original inclination which is already fixed in the soul so much that it becomes as if a second nature. Not that it was totally impossible to lose it, but it is very likely that the one who has reached the highest degree of the original inclination

62 ST I-II, q. 51, a. 3.

63 T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 80.

64 'Et ideo oportet in voluntate aliquem habitum ponere, quo bene disponatur ad suum actum. Ex ipsa etiam ratione habitus apparet quod habet quendam principalem ordinem ad voluntatem, prout habitus est quo quis utitur cum voluerit, ut supra dictum est.' ST I-II, q. 50, a. 5.

65 'Ad tertium dicendum quod voluntas ex ipsa natura potentiae inclinatur in bonum rationis. Sed quia hoc bonum multipliciter diversificatur, necessarium est ut ad aliquod determinatum bonum rationis voluntas per aliquem habitum inclinetur, ad hoc quod sequatur promptior operatio.' ST I-II, q. 50, a. 5, ad. 3.

will act in accord with this virtue.⁶⁶

I suggest that we can apply the same distinction to ‘prayer’. To demonstrate my point I will again recourse back to the *Interior Castle*.

The soul is capable of much more than we can imagine, and the sun that is in this royal chamber shines in all parts. It is very important for any soul that practices prayer, whether little or much, not to hold itself back and stay in one corner.⁶⁷

In this short statement Teresa hints that the soul’s powers are at the beginning of the spiritual life somewhat latent in their operation and it is prayer that helps them ‘not to hold back’. E. Howells also comments on this point (and verse) and states:

The capacity of the soul looks forward to what it is capable of in its relationship with God in union: it is capable of whatever God chooses, because God is its source, and it therefore has a potential limited not by its own nature but extending as far as God’s greatness.⁶⁸

Further, in the first two dwelling places she also describes very eloquently the soul’s struggle to persevere in the practice of prayer and warns that at this level, prayer can easily be lost, the consequence being man’s ‘return to the world’. This corresponds to ‘disposition’, which helps man’s will to be directed towards God, yet is still too fragile or unstable. The third dwelling places represent a well-ordered life, which also includes a regular life of a prayer. Teresa writes that this level lacks such strong temptations. The soul has a greater strength and it is not that easy to lose what has been gained. Therefore, the soul is also more stable in its prayer routine: prayer can thus be considered to be ‘a habit’. The habit of prayer together with the practice of virtues and the decision to ‘give God everything’ are the necessary conditions that enable man to enter the mystical stages of spiritual life.

This leads us to a final point I wish to raise. It was shown that Teresa distinguishes between prayer that can be learned or reached by man’s own effort and that which cannot, which is the gift of God. The question is whether the notion of prayer as a habit holds also under these circumstances, for we usually tend to think about the habits as of something that is gained by our own effort. Except these acquired habits, Aquinas also acknowledges the ‘infused habits’. The first reason Aquinas mentions for such an infusion suits our purpose:

The first reason is because there are some habits by which man is disposed to an end which exceeds the proportion of human nature, namely, the ultimate and perfect happiness of man, as stated above (Q5, A5). And since habits need to be in proportion with that to which man is disposed by them, therefore it is necessary that those habits, which dispose to this end, exceed the proportion of human nature. Wherefore such habits can never be in man except by Divine infusion, as is the case with all gratuitous virtues.⁶⁹

The notion of prayer given by God, that is, contemplation, fits the description of the infused habit perfectly. Since it was shown that the principal mover in the mystical stages, or the unitive way of spiritual life to be precise, is God himself, it is also clear that these elevated states are out of reach of man himself. In this sense, they are supernatural and exceeding human nature. The end of this spiritual life is the ultimate union which presents the uttermost happiness one may reach in the

66 ST IaIIae, q. 49, a.2, co.; see also ST IaIIae, q. 49, a.2, ad 3; ST IaIIae, q. 55, a.1, co.; ‘Unde quando dicitur quod *virtus est ultimum potentiae*, sumitur virtus pro obiecto virtutis. Id enim in quod ultimo potentia potest, est id ad quod dicitur virtus rei.’ ST IaIIae, q. 55, a.1, ad 1.

67 ‘Porque las cosas del alma siempre se han de considerar con plenitud y anchura y grandeza, pues no le levantan nada, que capaz es de mucho más que podremos considerar, y a todas partes de ella se comunica este sol que está en este palacio. Esto importa mucho a cualquier alma que tenga oración, poca o mucha, que no la arrincone ni apriete.’ M 1,2,8.

68 E. Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, pp. 97–98.

69 ‘Prima ratio est, quia aliqui habitus sunt quibus homo bene disponitur ad finem excedentem facultatem humanae naturae, qui est ultima et perfecta hominis beatitudo, ut supra dictum est. Et quia habitus oportet esse proportionatos ei ad quod homo disponitur secundum ipsos, ideo necesse est quod etiam habitus ad huiusmodi finem disponentes, excedant facultatem humanae naturae. Unde tales habitus nunquam possunt homini inesse nisi ex infusione divina, sicut est de omnibus gratuitis virtutibus.’ ST IaIIae, q. 51, a. 4.

present life. If we, therefore, consider prayer to be a habit, we can also consider infused prayer to be an infused habit, whereas ‘natural’ prayer, gained through one’s deliberate efforts to be the acquired habit. Since virtue is understood as a perfection of habit, the highest possible degree thereof, we can also deem continual prayer to be such a perfection, since this is the desired end of the life of prayer. Such prayer should, therefore, be in the logic of the thing considered to be a virtue. The possibility that man will abandon such prayer is not altogether excluded, however, the virtue is such a deeply rooted habit that it is more likely that the one who has reached it will not abandon it. Considering continual prayer to be a virtue, it follows that the one who has reached it will more likely follow it, that is, will pray without ceasing. Moreover, if the virtue is such a strongly rooted habit that it becomes as if second nature to man, it follows that also continual prayer becomes as if second nature to man. Depending on one’s spiritual life, prayer can be either a disposition, or an acquired habit or an infused one or a virtue.

This leads us back to the answer to the preliminary question of why Teresa states that not many are able to give their consent to be drawn by God towards him while she states that, even so, many may reach a certain level of contemplation, especially in the form of the prayer of quiet and the prayer of a partial union. I suggest understanding this problem from the point of view of prayer as a habit gradually gained through a deliberate practice of prayer. On the one hand, many can experience the gift of contemplation, because God is free to give what is his to whomever he wishes. Moreover, people living a well-ordered Christian life (that is those who have reached the ‘natural perfection’ of the third dwelling places), are already well disposed to be given such a gift if only as a kind of encouragement to attract them to the mystical stages. However, since such a kind of prayer surpasses their appropriate spiritual level (for they experience a kind of supernatural/mystical prayer while still being on the level of natural spiritual life), this supernatural prayer cannot be considered as a ‘habit’, but rather an exception which nevertheless many (or most) experience from time to time in their life.

On the other hand, those few who have the courage to ‘give God everything’ and accept the trials and dangers of the mystical life are given the gift of contemplation – mystical prayer – regularly, as Teresa suggests throughout her works. They have, so to say, the habit of contemplation, even if contemplation remains the gift of God. It is as if the souls were, through their habit in virtues, prayers and spiritual exercises, more or less continually disposed to God so well that he decides to join in their own prayers and elevate them to the level of contemplation – habitually, yet freely.⁷⁰

I would like to make a final remark on this topic. I think Teresa leads us to assume that the true contemplative is the one who experience contemplation on a regular basis and the true contemplative is already a true mystic. A mystic, in this understanding, is not necessarily the one experiencing fantastic phenomena but the one being elevated by God to a higher, supernatural life of the soul and prayer. This elevation, however, can take manifold forms and it need not be perceptible from without. The mystic is the one willing to be given whatever comes from the hand of God.⁷¹ As T. Dicken says:

If true mysticism is the practice and science of Christian conformity to the will of God, then they are hardly to be admitted as ‘mystical’ phenomena at all. Rather they are adventitious aids which God grants as and when he will in order to subvert the weakness of human nature.⁷²

70 ‘The gift of self, humility, silence: these not only surrender the soul to the direct action of God, but exercise an almost irresistible pressure on the divine liberty, forcing God as it were, to intervene in the spiritual life of the soul through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.’ P. Marie-Eugène, O.C.D., *I want to see God*, p. 456. ‘But [...] since the exercise of the gifts [...] depends on the free intervention of God, it still is necessary that God actually will the soul to the mystical life and contemplation.’ *Ibid.*, p. 477.

71 Recall holy Job.

72 T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 403.

4.2. THE SPACE-TIME FOR GOD

In this chapter, I have shown so far what kinds of prayer Teresa distinguishes, how they relate to each other, how they relate to the dwelling places of the interior castle of the soul and how they are related to the three stages of the spiritual life. This analysis has shown that prayer is an important and indispensable promoter of the interior life, awakener of the deeper regions of man's soul and a medium both of the union (in all its stages) with God and of the gaining of supernatural knowledge. No matter how important all these findings are there seems to be one aspect of our understanding of prayer missing.

All of these characteristics can very well testify to *human* prayer. But there is a contemplation, a kind of interior prayer with many specific modes, which is given to man by God. However, we usually tend to think about prayer as a human activity directed towards God. Conversely, we do not spontaneously think about prayer as the activity of God directed towards us. If there is a prayer given by God to man (i.e., contemplation), then we should assume that such 'prayer' is activity proceeding from God towards man.⁷³ T. Dicken summarises it aptly:

Prayer is not in the strictest terms, something which we do in order to make contact with God: true prayer is essentially something which God does for us. All that we can do is dispose ourselves to receive this grace of God by giving up our time and our mind to the task of prayer.⁷⁴

But that completely overturns our everyday understanding. What is 'prayer', then?

To unravel this knot, I suggest considering several other points of Teresa's teaching on the soul and prayer and take into account a few more seemingly minor remarks she makes. The fourth dwelling places of the *Interior Castle* are also the first ones where she speaks about the 'prayer of quiet'. Besides, she speaks about the soul being 'dilated'. Since she names the fourth dwelling places the 'heart', it follows that she speaks about the 'dilation of heart'.⁷⁵ In an attempt to explain the symbol of the castle in the second chapter, I showed that the journey through the castle cannot be understood in terms of a 'movement' from chamber one to chamber seven while leaving the previous dwelling places behind but that it should rather be understood in terms of destroying the 'dividing walls' between the circuits of those dwelling places, thus making the 'inner space' of the castle effectively larger without the need to think about the dilation in terms of 'spatial expansion'. The former is probably best understood as a gradual actualisation of the soul's potentiality.

The latter cannot hold, since the soul is a spiritual entity. As such, it is strictly speaking without any kinds of dimensions. On the other hand, Aquinas explains that the whole soul is in the whole body and also that the soul as a substantial form is nevertheless individualised through the matter (i.e., the body).⁷⁶ It could be argued, therefore, that the 'dimensions of the soul' are given by the dimensions of the body. In this reading, it could hardly be argued that the 'dilation of the heart' has any effect on the expansion of the physical dimensions of one's bodily heart. Yet, the soul being individualised by the body cannot be thought of as indefinite, 'reaching from one end of the world to the other'. Therefore, the 'dilation' cannot be thought of in terms of spatial expansion, yet perhaps it could be thought of in terms of the soul gaining 'depth',⁷⁷ or perhaps even more accurately in terms of a more intensive operation of the soul. T. Dicken describes it nicely: 'Provided that the soul responds to the grace it is being given, however, its love of God is greatly intensified, its understanding of his purposes becomes much clearer, and its desire and ability to serve him increases

73 M. Frohlich sees God's activity as a necessary compound of every prayer. Every true prayer is then a common activity of God and man. M. Frohlich, *Intersubjectivity of the Mystic*, p. 192.

74 T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 82.

75 She provides an interpretation of the verse 'cum dilatasti cor meum', see M IV: 1,5.

76 ST I, q. 75, a. 5; ST I, q. 76, a. 1. *De ente et essentia*, ch. 2, ch. 4. James Lehrberger, *The Anthropology of Aquinas's De ente et essentia*, pp. 837–838; 841–843. James Etwiler, *Man as Embodied Spirit*, pp. 370–374.

77 Not being able to define the 'depth' of the soul in accurate terms, let us, for the purpose of the argument, hold the everyday, somewhat blurred understanding of the term as appears in the expression 'deep personality'.

correspondingly.’¹ Elsewhere, he also notes that the ‘growth of the soul’ can be understood only analogically to the growth of the body and sees an abrupt change between the natural and supernatural phase of the spiritual life. Even so, he does not hesitate to underpin the fundamental continuity of the ‘growth of the soul’ before and after the transgression into the mystical stage.²

E. Howells understands this expansion as an ‘accommodation’ to the immediate relationship with God reached in the final union. This he further understands in terms of dynamism flowing from God into the soul, not only unifying the soul to Himself, but also unifying the soul itself together with all its faculties. He concludes: ‘The “idea of expansion” expresses the fact that the whole soul must gradually *become* interior, that is, it must be *accommodated* to the uncreated grace of union, through the process of transformation.’³

Now, prayer is a mediator of several things at once. First, it is the medium that enables man ‘to enter the castle’, to ‘walk through the dwelling places’, to ‘enlarge the inner space of the soul’. Some kinds of prayer are also to be understood as man’s activity taking place in the soul but being directed not first and foremost towards the effects mentioned but directed to the Living God. Teresa makes this absolutely clear when trying to explain the difference between vocal prayer and mental prayer. For her, the indispensable characteristics of the prayer is that one keeps remembering to whom he is speaking and who the Other (i.e., God) is. That is to say, the prayer is intentionally directed towards the other, rather than oneself. Therefore, the Other, the living person, is the primary end of prayer. The former effects (actualisation of one’s soul, inner delights, knowing one’s self better, etc.) are only secondary ‘by-products’. In other words, the purpose of prayer is not primarily a well-being of oneself, nor being ‘a nice person’, nor ‘spiritual wellness’ or being an ecstatic. The purpose of prayer is to be in a contact with the Other. Since prayer should be unceasing, it is to say, that the contact with the Other should also be unceasing.

The contact with the Other is, however, not one-way. Since the Other is also a Person, there is a response. God responds to the prayer by answering and he does so by using a tool of the same kind. Just as man makes contact with God through the mediacy of prayer, so also does God accept this invitation and make his contact with man through the medium of prayer. The prayer given by God is called ‘contemplation’ as was previously shown. Thus, prayer can be thought of as a shared language between the creature and the Creator.

Now, let us proceed a step further and think about this ‘contact with the Other’ in the analogy to contact between two humans. If you want to meet someone, a friend, for example, what do you do? You use some kind of medium (door bell, telephone, e-mail, Facebook), ask him to meet and suggest a place and time where you can talk. What do you do, however, if you wish to speak to a friend who is not a human, yet is a living, bodiless, omnipresent Person, who is God. The medium you choose is clear: prayer. But where and when do you meet God? Teresa repeats many times that God is within us, in the most intimate chamber of our soul, in the ‘centre’ of the soul, and all the trouble comes from our not understanding that he is near.⁴ The spiritual journey ‘through the castle’ leads one into the depth of his own soul, one’s own being, not to some kind of external place. Therefore, the ‘meeting place’ between God and man is man’s own soul. Taking into account everything said before, prayer is not only the medium that enables one to make contact with God but is also a key that opens up ‘the meeting place’.

Further, Teresa also makes another remark:

I should consider the time of prayer as not belonging to me and think that He can ask it of me in justice when I do not want to give it wholly to Him.⁵

1 T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, p. 124.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 132–133.

3 E. Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, pp. 103–104.

4 ‘Y viene todo el daño de no entender con verdad que está cerca, sino imaginarle lejos.’ CV 29,5.

5 CV 23,2.

Prayer is, therefore, also time for God. This statement is quite obvious in the case of vocal prayer – man sets apart some time to pray to God either alone, or in company or in choir as is the case of monastic prayers. However, since the end towards which man should aim is continual prayer without ceasing, it follows that the whole of man's life should be 'time for God opened in one's own soul'. Further, if man through the medium of prayer opens within his own soul a 'space' for God and his whole life should become 'time for God', it follows that man becomes and should become a 'space-time for God' while God becomes 'space-time' for man.

5. Will, Intellect, Memory

In the previous chapters, I have shown what Teresa thinks about the nature of the human soul and its activity in regard to the spiritual life of man. Further, I have described the stages of spiritual development and the means of such spiritual progress. In all of the previous chapters, albeit in slightly different contexts, two things have repeatedly come to the fore: the intellect and the will. It has been argued that the mystical stages of the spiritual life, although stratified and distinguished in Teresa's works, nevertheless pertain to the intellect as the highest power of the soul. Further, this view cannot be simply ruled over by pointing to her notorious remark about the necessity 'not to think much, but to love much'. Even though it is true that Teresa pays far more attention to the will than to the intellect in the mystical dwelling places, this has a specific reason which I hope to show later in this chapter. Moreover, the emphasis on the will rather than on the intellect is possible to be understood as a shift of attention given by the nature of the mystical life itself. This will show itself fully in the part about mystical knowledge in the next chapter. It is noteworthy that this shift of attention does not lose intellect from her sight altogether, which is an important though often overlooked point.

Further, the idea is that the peculiarities concerning the relation between the will and the intellect in the mystical stage of the spiritual life can be grasped through the prism of Aquinas's treatment of the mutuality between the intellect and the will. Although in previous chapters I have preferred to start with Teresa's own words, searching for Aquinas's help only where necessary for a better understanding, in this instance I wish to reverse the process. One reason is that this approach will provide the reader with a prism through which Teresa's texts will become easily comprehensible.

It might be argued that such an approach can easily slide into some kind of *eisegesis* bending Teresa's own meaning. As I am fully aware of the danger, I pay special heed to avoid overstepping the boundaries of Teresa's own thought. Rather, respecting them, I try to 'fill the gaps'. The reason is that I see some fundamental conformity between both positions, although expressed differently, and in the case of Teresa's texts, they are inherent rather latently. To be able to depict this conformity I, therefore, wish to start with the position which is better put into words. The other reason why I have chosen this process is that the more we approach the 'mystical', the more Teresa is found wanting in terms of words; it is the realm of super-natural experience surpassing the sensational reality on the one hand and of speculation on the other. If Teresa had trouble in expressing herself, Aquinas did not, at least until his own mystical experience in the end closed his mouth. Even so, he can provide a vocabulary which Teresa lacked, thus giving us an opportunity to understand Teresa better.

5.1. AQUINAS ON THE WILL AND ITS MUTUAL RELATION TO THE INTELLECT

Since the subject of this inquiry is not the full scope of Aquinas's theory, I limit myself to the questions about the will in the first part of *Summa Theologiae* and even more so to the *Prima Secundae*.⁶ Besides, I find the questions on the beatitude (Lat. *beatitudo*) preceding the questions on

⁶ I am aware of the other texts in *De Malo*, *De Veritate*, etc. I am also aware about an extensive discussion about the relation between the will and the intellect, the questions of human freedom, etc. For the purpose of this text, however, I limit myself to the minimum needed to grasp Aquinas's position on the relation between the will and the intellect and a question of choice for two reasons. First, his teaching on the relation between the intellect and the will is fairly consistent throughout the scope of his works and second, the other works often raise questions that are fascinating in themselves (e.g., the First sin and sin in general), but which would not contribute significantly to the main topics of these three chapters, except by

the will at the same location.

Before treating the very will and its pursuit of the final end, I find it necessary briefly to expound the relation between the will and the intellect.⁷ Aquinas sees both the will and the intellect as distinct, though not separated powers of the soul. They are distinct, for each of them has a different object. Besides, there is also a difference in a direction of ‘the movement’. While the intellect is to a certain degree a passive recipient, or in other words, the movement proceeds from the thing towards the intellect, in the case of the will the situation is precisely the opposite. The will as an appetitive power directs man to the thing. The object of the intellect is the truth, whereas it is the good in the case of the will. Nevertheless, the will is essentially an intellectual power. ‘To regard it as in some way subject of the external control of the intellect is a misunderstanding; it is rather intrinsically characterised by intellectuality on account of its participation therein.’⁸

However, neither the intellect nor the will can be considered as the very substance of the soul, but rather as flowing from or emanating from this substance (Teresa speaks about the ‘very centre of the soul’).⁹ This is what makes possible what K. O’Reilly calls the ‘dynamic reciprocity’,¹⁰ or better put to words, the ‘dynamics of reciprocal causality’. This means that the relation between the intellect and the will is not one-way, despite Aquinas’s conviction that the intellect is a higher power than the will both in the order of generation and nature. By the former is meant that the will always reacts to the intellect (or intellectual cognition) and not vice versa. In other words, it means that the will would never follow any good on its own, without the good being first known as good by the intellect.

The reciprocal causality is found in the influence the former exerts on the latter and vice versa. The intellect moves the will by presenting to it the good understood as its object and end,¹¹ while the will ‘wills’ the intellect to understand, to gain knowledge.¹² In presenting the good before the will the intellect acts as in the force of the final cause, causing the will to ‘move’ towards the known good. In a similar way, the will acts as an efficient cause: it moves the intellect to know the truth.¹³ K. O’Reilly goes even further in speaking about the ‘*participation*’ of the one in the other,¹⁴ and reminds us of Aquinas’s words that both powers include ‘one another in their acts’.¹⁵ Aquinas himself even uses the expression that the intellect and the will circle around each other.¹⁶ K. O’Reilly is convinced that it is possible to think about their activities as overflowing into each other.¹⁷

The final assumption is necessary to be understood in its proper context. It is crucial to realise that for Aquinas neither the intellect nor the will are identical with the ‘essence of the soul’ but are ‘merely’ two powers among other powers (although of the highest rank) emanating from the

shifting the attention.

7 Excellent analysis of this topic is provided in K. O’Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing*, pp. 80–107. This part about the mutual relation between the intellect and the will draws heavily upon this text.

8 K. O’Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing*, p. 94.

9 ‘The intellect and the will issue from the essence of the soul. They are related to the soul as accidental forms to substantial form and, as such, owe their being to the soul.’ K. O’Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing*, p. 95.

10 K. O’Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing*, pp. 81f.

11 ‘Et hoc modo intellectus movet voluntatem, quia bonum intellectum est obiectum voluntatis, et movet ipsam ut finis.’ ST I, q. 82, a. 4.

12 ‘Ex his ergo apparet ratio quare hae potentiae suis actibus invicem se includunt, quia intellectus intelligit voluntatem velle, et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere.’ ST I, q. 82, a. 4, ad 4.

13 K. O’Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing*, pp. 99–103.

14 K. O’Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing*, pp. 99f. See also: ‘Nunc autem, cum utrumque radicetur in una substantia animae, et unum sit quodammodo principium alterius, consequens est ut quod est in voluntate, sit etiam quodammodo in intellectu.’ ST I, q. 87, a. 4, ad 1.

15 ‘Ex his ergo apparet ratio quare hae potentiae suis actibus invicem se includunt, quia intellectus intelligit voluntatem velle, et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere. Et simili ratione bonum continetur sub vero, inquantum est quoddam verum intellectum; et verum continetur sub bono, inquantum est quoddam bonum desideratum.’ ST I, q. 82, a. 4, ad 1.

16 ‘Sciendum est autem, quod intellectus tam speculativus quam practicus potest perfici dupliciter aliquo habitu. Uno modo absolute et secundum se, prout praecedit voluntatem, quasi eam movens; alio modo prout sequitur voluntatem, quasi ad imperium actum suum eliciens: quia, ut dictum est, istae duae potentiae, scilicet intellectus et voluntas, se invicem circummeunt.’ De Virt., q. 1, a. 7.

17 K. O’Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing*, p. 103.

‘essence of the soul’. To put it otherwise, the essence of the human soul is not the intellect, nor is it the will or any other power. The essence of the soul is a principle distinct from the individual powers of the soul, the intellect and the will included. That is, as I believe, where the possibility of the mutual interinvolvement of the intellect and the will is grounded. Even though it is true that Aquinas in the last stance gives precedence to the intellect stating that this power indeed is higher than the will since, in the end, the intellect is able to grasp the very essence of its object whereas the will apprehends ‘only’ the good and joy connected to reaching this end but not its essence.

However, it should also be stressed that the situation is not as straightforward as that. There are other places where precedence is obviously given to the will. I presume that Aquinas in fact equalises both powers to a large degree. By this I mean that he sees them as two necessary companions; one cannot be without the other even though the will is in the end called an intellectual power formally subordinated to the intellect.

In this inquiry this mutual relation between both powers is crucial for several reasons. First, it enables us to see why Teresa, even when concentrating on the will, does not lose respect of the intellect either, second, it provides us with a tool to speak about the final union, and third, it will make it possible to understand prayer, respectively contemplation, even more fully.

5.2. INTENTION AND CHOICE

Now, in this perspective, I wish to mention St Thomas’s teaching on the freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*) and make one important distinction. Just as with any other created reality, the will also has some nature of its own. This nature consists in ‘following the good’¹⁸ and following the will’s final end. This movement of the will towards the good is based upon the knowledge gained by the intellect. Such knowledge may be accurate, complete, incomplete or incorrect.¹⁹ Irrespective of the individual cases, the very final end of the will is the ultimate good, that is God. God is such a complete good that the will is not capable of not-willing it – provided the intellect has come to know God to be the Final Good.²⁰

This is the nature of the will, which gives the will its limits. In relation to its own nature, it is nonsensical to speak about the freedom of volition, since the will cannot will to cease to be a will and become something other. Just so, it cannot decide to will something other than the good. This is the only instance which sets limits, according to Aquinas, to the *liberum arbitrium*. In relation to any other object, to the end other than the final and/or to the means leading both to the final end or to the partial ends, man is free to choose which of the known good he will follow.²¹ ‘Voluntariness requires an act of knowledge in the same way as it requires an act of will.’²² This is to say that each choice is conducted not solely by the act of the will itself but the will and the intellect are joined in the decision, and so the mutual relatedness of both powers comes to the surface once again.

However, it is noteworthy, that in this present state of life man preserves freedom of choice even in the case of the very final end. This is due to its intrinsic relation to the intellection. The inability

18 For example: ‘Sicut igitur id in quod tendit appetitus naturalis, est bonum existens in re; ita id in quod tendit appetitus animalis vel voluntarius, est bonum apprehensum. Ad hoc igitur quod voluntas in aliquid tendat, non requiritur quod sit bonum in rei veritate, sed quod apprehendatur in ratione boni.’ ST IaIIae, q. 8., a. 1.

19 ‘Ad tertium dicendum quod id in quod voluntas tendit peccando, etsi sit malum et contra rationalem naturam secundum rei veritatem, apprehenditur tamen ut bonum et conveniens naturae, inquantum est conveniens homini secundum aliquam passionem sensus, vel secundum aliquem habitum corruptum.’ ST IaIIae, q. 6, a. 4, ad 3.

20 ‘Unde si proponatur aliquod obiectum voluntati quod sit universaliter bonum et secundum omnem considerationem, ex necessitate voluntas in illud tendet, si aliquid velit, non enim poterit velle oppositum. Si autem proponatur sibi aliquod obiectum quod non secundum quamlibet considerationem sit bonum, non ex necessitate voluntas feretur in illud. Et quia defectus cuiuscumque boni habet rationem non boni, ideo illud solum bonum quod est perfectum et cui nihil deficit, est tale bonum quod voluntas non potest non velle, quod est beatitudo. Alia autem quaelibet particularia bona, inquantum deficiunt ab aliquo bono, possunt accipi ut non bona, et secundum hanc considerationem, possunt repudiari vel approbari a voluntate, quae potest in idem ferri secundum diversas considerationes.’ ST IaIIae, q. 10, a. 2.

21 ST IaIIae, q. 6.

22 ‘Ad tertium dicendum quod eo modo requiritur ad voluntarium actus cognitionis, sicut et actus voluntatis.’ Ibid., q. 6, a. 3, ad 3.

not to follow the ultimate Good is determined by man's complete and absolute knowledge thereof. However, in this present state of life, man can never reach absolute knowledge of God as his absolute good. These can be to a certain degree abstracted from and/or trespassed as in mystical knowledge but, as will be shown in later chapters, even in the case of mystical knowledge there is never a complete and absolute certainty that what has been known has been known appropriately. Since man can never have absolute and inalienable knowledge of God as his only and final end, man is also never determined to will God alone. In other words, man always has a choice not to will God. The topic of the final end and the question of the beatitude, as well as the question of choice are treated further in this chapter. The next chapter also briefly touches upon the question of man's freedom.

At this point I would like to elaborate certain points of Teresa's teaching a little more and show the points of contact between her and Aquinas. Now, Teresa understands the beginning of the life of prayer as the entryway 'into the castle'. But to be able to start the life of prayer, man first needs to decide to do so and to persevere on the spiritual journey. Perseverance in the life of prayer and the journey chosen either in the natural or in the supernatural spiritual life can be understood as an expression of intention; the intention to grasp the final end, to reach the mystical marriage in this life and the beatific vision in the afterlife. The intention belongs first and foremost to that which moves towards the end. Since it is the will which moves all other powers of the soul towards the end, the intention is an act of the will.²³ I suggest understanding the habit of prayer treated in the previous chapter as an expression of such an intention. Moreover, Aquinas adds that the relation of the will and the end is threefold. First, in an absolute sense, it is a choice (volition) to reach the end. Second, the end is seen as a rest bringing the enjoyment. Third, the end is seen as the term towards which something is ordained.²⁴

Now, concerning the (absolute) sense mentioned by Aquinas, I think it possible to understand the first choice Teresa presents as an indispensable 'opener' of the spiritual life, as a choice of the spiritual over the material, God over 'the world' and life everlasting over hell. The second choice then can be understood as a choice of God over one's self or, more specifically, as a choice of God's will over my own and supernatural knowledge over natural knowledge.

The second sense mentioned by Aquinas, being rest bringing enjoyment, is reflected in Teresa's description of the mystical marriage, as I believe where she speaks about the rest of the will in which the turbulent experiences of the sixth dwelling places, as well as the longing and pain experienced from being separated from the beloved, cease. In the third sense, God is seen as the one end towards which man is ordained and cannot become fully himself without reaching it.

Further, Aquinas concludes that we can have the intention of the will, which is the movement of the will to the end as acquired by means, without having determined about those means, which are the object of choice (*electio*).²⁵ That is to say, man can have some general intention to reach God and salvation without having decided about any practical way of doing so.

Teresa gives her advice: first, start to pray. Once you have established the habit of prayer, forget yourself and give yourself completely to God, your mind (intellect, will and memory) included. Aquinas stresses again that man wills *beatitudo* of necessity but the choice of means is his. He also adds that 'the end does not always necessitate in man the choosing of the means, because the means are not always such that the end cannot be gained without them; or, if they be such, they are not always considered in that light.'²⁶ It is clear, from what Teresa writes, that both the life of prayer and those two crucial decisions are means necessary to reach the end, but not necessarily

23 'Unde intentio primo et principaliter pertinet ad id quod movet ad finem [...]. Voluntas autem movet omnes alias vires animae ad finem, ut supra habitum est. Unde manifestum est quod intentio proprie est actus voluntatis.' Iallae, q. 12, a. 1.

24 Iallae, q. 12, a. 1, ad 2.

25 Iallae, q. 12, a. 4, ad 3.

26 Iallae, q. 13, a. 6; q. 13, 'Et similiter non oportet quod semper ex fine insit homini necessitas ad eligendum ea quae sunt ad finem, quia non omne quod est ad finem, tale est ut sine eo finis haberi non possit; aut, si tale sit, non semper sub tali ratione consideratur.' ST Iallae, q. 13, a. 6, ad 1.

the mystical life and certainly not the experience of various mystical phenomena.

5.3. THE END

This brings the question of the end to the fore. In the *Interior Castle*, Teresa makes a basic distinction between the natural and the supernatural stage of the spiritual life of man. She further distinguishes the latter into two phases, the first being transitory (fourth dwelling places), whereas the latter is the truly mystical one. For this part the basic distinction into the natural and supernatural plays a crucial role, therefore the more subtle distinction is put aside for a while.

In the second chapter, I have shown that the third dwelling places, reaching the well-ordered Christian life, constitute an end in themselves. However, Teresa tries to convince her readers that the state which might be considered as the final end is not as such, but represents only a *partial* end, for her experience shows that a higher life of the soul is possible. I have called the end reached in the third dwelling places a ‘natural one’ and ‘partial’, since it turns out that it is not yet the final one (although at some stage of the spiritual life it had seemed to be the final end). This natural end is good in itself, opening the doors to further spiritual progress, at the end of which there is a delightful repose ‘in the arms of the beloved’. Thus, Teresa lures her sisters and other readers to venture this journey, *to want* to come closer to God presenting the final mystical union as the ‘final end reachable in this present state of life.’

From the beginning of the mystical stage of the spiritual life, Teresa speaks about the ‘*gustos*’, the spiritual delights. Although she treats them extensively in the fourth dwelling places, she does not lose them from her sight even in the latter dwelling places, mentioning them occasionally. In her attempt to depict the difference between natural satisfaction (*contentos*) and the spiritual delights (*gustos*), she says:

I mean there is no similarity at the beginning, for afterward the delight fills everything; this water overflows through all the dwelling places and faculties until reaching the body. This is why I said that it begins in God and ends in ourselves. For, certainly, as anyone who may have experienced it will see, the whole exterior man enjoys this spiritual delight and sweetness.²⁷ [...] No light is seen, nor is the place seen where the brazier is; but the warmth and the fragrant fumes spread through the entire soul and even often enough, as I have said, the body shares in them.²⁸

This overflow of the spiritual delight rooted and proceeding from God, directed to the human soul and finally touching the very body of man, is fascinating not only because it could be taken as a foretaste of the final mystical union but also because it convenes Aquinas’s account of the final beatitude. Thomas writes:

Man’s happiness consists essentially in his being united to the Uncreated Good, which is his last end, as shown above. [...] Nevertheless the operations of the senses can belong to happiness, both antecedently and consequently: antecedently, in respect of imperfect happiness, such as can be had in this life, since the operation of the intellect demands a previous operation of the sense; consequently, in that perfect happiness which we await in heaven; because at the resurrection, *from the very happiness of the soul*, as Augustine says (*Ep. ad Dioscor.*) *the body and the bodily senses will receive a certain overflow, so as to be perfected in their operations.*²⁹ [...] In perfect happiness the entire man is perfected, in the lower part of his nature,

27 ‘Digo en su principio, que después todo lo hinche-, vase revertiendo este agua por todas las moradas y potencias hasta llegar al cuerpo; que por eso dije que comienza de Dios y acaba en nosotros.’ M 4,2,4.

28 ‘Ni se ve la lumbre, ni dónde está; mas el calor y humo oloroso penetra toda el alma y aun hartas veces - como he dicho participa el cuerpo.’ M 4,2,6.

29 ‘Nam beatitudo hominis consistit essentialiter in coniunctione ipsius ad bonum increatum, quod est ultimus finis, ut supra ostensum est. [...] Possunt autem operationes sensus pertinere ad beatitudinem antecedenter et consequenter. Antecedenter quidem, secundum beatitudinem imperfectam, qualis in praesenti vita haberi potest, nam operatio intellectus praeexigit operationem sensus. Consequenter autem, in illa perfecta beatitudine quae expectatur in caelo, quia post resurrectionem, ex ipsa beatitudine animae, ut Augustinus dicit in epistola ad Dioscorum, fiet quaedam refluencia in corpus et in sensus corporeos, ut in suis operationibus perficiantur; ut infra magis patebit, cum de resurrectione agetur. Non autem

by an overflow from the higher. But in the imperfect happiness of this life, it is otherwise; we advance from the perfection of the lower part to the perfection of the higher part.³⁰

In the excerpt from Aquinas we can track several important pieces of information. First, the perfect beatitude, not even for Aquinas void of delight, is seen as overflowing from the soul to the very body of man. Second, this overflow perfects the whole man, and third, in the present state of life, the perfection needs to go the other way round. This is another way of saying that spiritual development must begin from the body and proceed through the lower to the higher powers of the soul, which is very much in accord with what Teresa depicts in the *Interior Castle*, as has been shown. Moreover, she shows us that the mystical stage is not void of spiritual delights and even that the spiritual delight is a substantial part of the final union. That is, reaching the final end reachable in this state of life is connected to delightful repose, namely repose of the will unified to the will of God as was demonstrated. Moreover, the whole mystical life is led by the will as gradually unified to the will of God.

This is important as Aquinas sees the beatitude (*beatitudo*) as the final end of man consisting in a vision of the essence of God reached by the intellect, leading to the delightful rest of the will.³¹ The intimate relation between the will and the intellect comes to the fore once again. Now, the essence of the happiness does not consist in the act of the will, but in the act of the intellect. The act of the will is the delight connected to the attainment of the vision.

For at first we desire to attain an intelligible end; we attain it, through its being made present to us by an act of the intellect; and then the delighted will rests in the end when attained. So, therefore, the essence of happiness consists in an act of the intellect: but the delight that results from happiness pertains to the will.³²

The will can rest at last by grasping the uncreated Good which only can satisfy it fully and for ever. The will, therefore, is the power tending towards this end, or in other words, enabling man to come closer to this end. Further, Aquinas distinguishes the final end under the aspect of happiness as something created in man, from the final end understood as a cause or object of the happiness, which must be seen as something uncreated.³³ It is as if to say that God in Himself, the end which we aim to grasp, cannot be seen as anything created but his delightful presence in the soul of man can.

Now, since the essence of the happiness consists in the act of the intellect, Aquinas comes to the conclusion that it must pertain to the highest power of the soul, therefore the last and most perfect happiness consists in contemplation, for the object of the operation of the beatitude is God himself, or God as the supreme Good.³⁴

It was shown that Teresa distinguishes between the *pensamiento* and *entendimiento*, where *entendimiento* is understood as the 'higher', passive intellect pertaining to the whole mystical stage of the spiritual life closely connected to contemplation both in Aquinas as is shown above and in Teresa as was shown in the previous chapter.

Further, Aquinas raises several points crucial for the understanding of mystical knowledge,

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- tunc operatio qua mens humana Deo coniungitur, a sensu dependebit.' ST Iallae, q. 3, a. 3.
- 30 'Ad tertium dicendum quod in perfecta beatitudine perficitur totus homo, sed in inferiori parte per redundantiam a superiori. In beatitudine autem imperfecta praesentis vitae, e converso a perfectione inferioris partis proceditur ad perfectionem superioris.' ST Iallae, q. 3., a. 3, ad 3.
- 31 'Respondeo dicendum quod ultima et perfecta beatitudo non potest esse nisi in visione divinae essentiae.' ST Iallae, q. 8, a.3; 'Unde voluntas in ea non fertur, nisi quatenus fertur in finem, unde hoc ipsum quod in eis vult, est finis.' ST Iallae, q. 8, a. 2.
- 32 'Nam a principio volumus consequi finem intelligibilem; consequimur autem ipsum per hoc quod fit praesens nobis per actum intellectus; et tunc voluntas delectata conquiescit in fine iam adepto. Sic igitur essentia beatitudinis in actu intellectus consistit, sed ad voluntatem pertinet delectatio beatitudinem consequens.' ST Iallae, q. 3, a. 4.
- 33 ST Iallae, q. 3, a.1.
- 34 ST Iallae, q. 3, a.5. The topic of this text is the difference between the practical and the speculative intellect and for the reasons shown further does not play a crucial role, however, Aquinas's conviction that the last and most perfect happiness consists in contemplation does, thus the inclusion of this here.

which will be treated in the next chapter. The question is whether the perfect beatitude consists in the consideration of the speculative sciences and argues that it cannot consist therein, since the whole science is virtually present in its principles but the first premises of the speculative sciences are received through the senses and therefore knowledge cannot extend further than the sensible things can lead.

Consequently, the intellect is [...] perfected [...] inasmuch as it partakes of a certain likeness to that which is above the human intellect, viz., the intelligible light, or something of the kind. Now whatever is by something else is reduced to that which is of itself. Therefore, man's final perfection must needs be through knowledge of something above the human intellect. But it has been shown, that man cannot acquire through sensible things, the knowledge of separate substances, which are above the human intellect. Consequently, it follows that man's happiness cannot consist in the consideration of speculative sciences. However, just as in sensible forms there is a participation of the higher substances, so the consideration of speculative sciences is a certain participation of true and perfect happiness.³⁵

Aquinas shows here that there is a kind of knowledge which does not consist in speculation and yet is a kind of knowledge. It also means that the 'contemplation of philosophers' is not identical with the theological contemplation considered to be the perfect happiness (beatitude) of man. The former leads to an assumption that the other knowledge must be some kind of participation in the knowledge of God, that the intellect partakes in intelligible light and through this participation gains the other kind of knowledge. The latter again speaks about partaking of the true and perfect beatitude. In other words, philosophical contemplation can be seen as taking part in theological contemplation but being of a lesser kind, whereas theological contemplation is understood as partaking in the perfect beatitude.

Aquinas adds that only the contemplation of God, who is truth by his essence, makes man completely happy.³⁶ 'For perfect happiness the intellect needs to reach the very Essence of the First Cause. And thus, it will have its perfection through union with God as with that object, in which alone man's happiness consists.'³⁷

These three points are important for our understanding of Teresa. It has been shown already that she speaks about natural and supernatural knowledge, that contemplation is a crucial part of the whole mystical stage, or perhaps, it would be better to say that the whole mystical stage consists in some kind of contemplation. Teresa also shows that man gains gradually higher forms of contemplation until he reaches the highest form of contemplation in the mystical marriage. Teresa makes an effort to explain that such highest form of contemplation consists in the intellectual vision of the most Holy Trinity abiding within one's own soul. She also describes the intratrinitarian relations, thus making it clear that such contemplation consists in the vision of the intellect which grasps the very nature of God. This in turn is the description of the final beatific vision Thomas provides above.

Further, Teresa's insistence that the mystical stage pertains to the intellect (*entendimiento*) and the knowledge gained in this stage is not a discursive one nor a speculative one, is further supported

35 'Unde [...] perficitur intellectus [...] in quantum in ea participatur aliqua similitudo alicuius quod est supra intellectum humanum, scilicet lumen intelligibile, vel aliquid huiusmodi. Omne autem quod est per aliud, reducitur ad id quod est per se. Unde oportet quod ultima perfectio hominis sit per cognitionem alicuius rei quae sit supra intellectum humanum. Ostensum est autem quod per sensibilia non potest deveniri in cognitionem substantiarum separatarum, quae sunt supra intellectum humanum. Unde relinquitur quod ultima hominis beatitudo non possit esse in consideratione speculativarum scientiarum. Sed sicut in formis sensibilibus participatur aliqua similitudo superiorum substantiarum, ita consideratio scientiarum speculativarum est quaedam participatio verae et perfectae beatitudinis.' ST IaIIae, q. 3, a. 6.

36 'Unde relinquitur quod solus Deus sit veritas per essentiam, et quod eius contemplatio faciat perfecte beatum.' ST IaIIae, q. 3, a. 7.

37 ST IaIIae, q. 3, a. 7, ad. 2. 'For perfect happiness the intellect needs to reach the very Essence of the First Cause. And thus it will have its perfection through union with God as with that object, in which alone man's happiness consists.' ('Et sic perfectionem suam habebit per unionem ad Deum sicut ad obiectum, in quo solo beatitudo hominis consistit, ut supra dictum est.') ST IaIIae, q. 3, a. 8.

by Aquinas's claim that the perfect contemplation of God's essence, hence the final beatitude, does not consist in knowledge gained through speculation. He claims the same as Teresa, that is, that the perfect contemplation of God's essence surpasses the capacity of man's speculative science. Moreover, he speaks about the perfection of man's intellect through union with God. Teresa speaks of nothing less than that. The seventh dwelling place is the stage of full and perfect union with God through man's intellect and will contemplating God's essence and finding both the ultimate peace and joy therein.

5.3.1. MYSTICAL UNION AND BEATIFIC VISION

Now, it is important to realise that Aquinas speaks about the life to come whereas Teresa when speaking about the mystical union of the seventh dwelling place, the delightful presence of the Trinity in the very centre of the soul, speaks about this present state of life. Since Aquinas is convinced that the very final end of man, the ultimate happiness of the beatific vision, is reached only in the afterlife, it would be misleading to consider the mystical union to be such an end. Moreover, Teresa herself insists that even the mystical union, once it was reached, is not so secure that man cannot not fall away from God again. She states: 'There is no security in this life.'³⁸ Man can choose a different path than that leading to God, and a different end from God himself and until he has stepped over the threshold of death the choice is his. Aquinas has explained to us that this is due to the fact that man's knowledge and/or understanding is until that moment incomplete or rather they are not permanent; man may forget it. Teresa demonstrates such a possibility by the example of King David. She laments the fate of those who have experienced such high states of elevation and the joys of God's presence in this life and yet have diverged themselves from the paths of the Lord.³⁹

Yet, both Aquinas's account of the beatific vision and Teresa's account of the seventh dwelling place resemble each other to a remarkable degree. One of the most intriguing questions of this thesis is, therefore, whether the mystical marriage is or is not a beatific vision in the body. The last, seventh chapter, is dedicated to the mystical marriage and this question is specifically treated there.⁴⁰ Before coming to it, there is a long way to go. Since Teresa accepts the possibility of diverging herself from God even in this stage of the spiritual life, let us at this point assume that the mystical marriage and the beatific vision are similar, although not identical and (dis)prove this assumption in the last chapter.

There are those things (partial ends) which are opposed to our final end (like accumulating wealth or carnal enjoyments with which the souls living outside of the castle, in its foreyards, are occupied), yet we may not know it and falsely understand them to be some good and an end in themselves. Should we come to the knowledge that we were wrong, for they did not bring us the coveted beatitude, we may leave them and search for other, different, and hopefully better satisfying ends. Thus, we may come to know things that are not opposed to the final end, are rewarding in this or that aspect, and bring with themselves some kind of satisfaction, like a well-ordered life lived in accord with the commandments of the Lord, as described in the third dwelling places. But, the journey leads further, as Teresa shows us, and it may happen that the Grace of the Lord would show us in an instant glimpse the riches of his house leading to our understanding that what we had considered to be the final, fully satisfying end is only a partial one, which means opening the doors to much deeper delights of the soul. Should we take up the courage and venture into further spiritual development, we may finally reach 'the end' in the mystical marriage, only to understand that even this state is not the 'very final end', for it lacks the permanence, inalienability and perfection of the final one. Teresa often expresses her desire to die and be with God and the pain

38 'Digo en seguridad, y dije mal, que no la hay en esta vida, y por eso siempre entiendo que digo «si no torna a dejar el camino comenzado».' M 3,1,1.

39 M 3,1,4.

40 Alas, the topics of the fifth to seventh chapters are intermingled to such an extent that individual questions appear at various stages of our inquiry, sometimes even in untimely manner.

experienced due to her having to stay in body – *muero, porque no muero*.⁴¹

The beginning of the life of prayer understood by Teresa to be the necessary condition for ‘entering the castle’ can be seen as the diverging of man from those ends falsely understood as the final ones and search for the truly final one, leading to the well-ordered Christian life as the ‘natural end’, but being in fact again only another means towards the very final one. In a similar way, the mystical marriage is to be seen as the ‘supernatural end *of this life*’ but not as the final end of man, which is reached only in the afterlife, in the beatific vision. The exact nature of the relation between the mystical marriage and the beatific vision is treated in chapter seven as has already been forestalled. Nevertheless, I find it important at this point to show that the mystical marriage can be understood as a final end of this present life, higher than the final end of the natural stage of spiritual development, lacking the binding force of the very final end of the beatific vision (and thus preserving the freedom not to choose God), and yet causing the closest union of man and God. I find it important to realise that following each of the three possible spiritual ends depends on the intellect’s understanding or having knowledge. As we have seen above, Aquinas makes the distinction between the end and the means leading to this end, and states: ‘Wherefore the will is directed to them, only insofar as it is directed to the end: so that what it wills in them, is the end.’⁴² What man wills in the spiritual life, no matter in which of its stages, is the beatific vision, life satisfying without end.

Therefore, it is possible to draw two conclusions here. First, no end reached in this life can be considered definite, the ultimate, the final one, although the mystical union can be seen as the ultimate end reachable in this state of life yet void of the absolute perfection of the beatific vision in the afterlife. We can perhaps use an image of the spiritual life as the search for the ultimate end, the ultimate happiness. This search, usually described by the three stages of the spiritual life, could be expressed in the perspective of abandoning those ‘ends’ which are not final, recognising them for what they truly are or are not, that is, recognising them to be the means either leading or not leading to this final end. This process is necessarily connected to the knowledge man possesses in individual stages.

Second, even if the mystical marriage cannot be understood as the very final end, its semblance to the beatific vision, both under the aspect of intellect contemplating the essence of God and the will enjoying the perfect happiness, is striking.

Aquinas in the question about rapture states that rapture brings about the special, supernatural kind of knowledge, which lacks the permanence of the beatific knowledge, however, is of the same nature. Thus, he comes to the conclusion that the knowledge gained through rapture and the knowledge gained in the beatific vision are of the same kind.⁴³ Rapture, as one kind of supernatural experience, is dealt with by Teresa in the sixth dwelling places. However, we have seen that the state of the soul in the seventh dwelling place is even more elevated, in a way crowning all of the previous stages. What belongs to the previous mystical stages also belongs, although in an exalted manner, to the last dwelling place. Second, we have seen that the will and the intellect are closely bound, mutually involving each other, never to be fully separated. Third, Aquinas explains:

Nothing hinders one and the same thing from belonging, under different aspects, to different powers. Accordingly, the vision of God, as vision, is an act of the intellect, but as a good and an end, is the object of the will. And as such is the fruition thereof: so that the intellect attains this end, as the executive power, but the will as the motive power, moving (the powers) towards the end and enjoying the end attained.⁴⁴

41 The refrain of one of the most famous poems of Santa Teresa, called *Vivo sin Vivir en mí*. The whole poem is contained in Vol. 3 of the *Collected Works* or at the end of the *Obras Completas*. The first strofa says: ‘Vivo sin vivir en mí/Y de tal manera espero/Que muero porque no muero.’

42 ‘Unde voluntas in ea non fertur, nisi quatenus fertur in finem, unde hoc ipsum quod in eis vult, est finis.’ ST IaIIae, q. 8, a. 2.

43 ST IaIIae, q. 175, a. 3.

44 ‘Ad primum ergo dicendum quod nihil prohibet unum et idem, secundum diversas rationes, ad diversas potentias pertinere. Ipsa igitur visio Dei, in quantum est visio, est actus intellectus, in quantum autem est bonum et finis, est voluntatis

Aquinas speaks here about the beatific vision in the afterlife. However, we have noticed in Teresa's teaching, that the *via unitiva* stresses the importance of the will and the will is the motive power leading all of the other powers of the soul towards the final union.

Now, if the knowledge gained in rapture is of the same kind as the knowledge gained in the beatific vision, and the intellect and will are so closely related that even in the beatific vision it is possible to discern it as belonging to both powers under the different aspects, I think it possible to consider that what is true about knowledge in rapture can also be said about the delightful rest of the will both in the beatific vision and in the mystical marriage. This means, that both could be seen to be of the same kind, of the same nature, with the difference being that the latter lacks the permanence and definiteness of the former. Thus, the mystical marriage may be understood to be of the same nature as the beatific vision but since it lacks its permanence and inalienability, the mystical marriage is an imperfect beatitude, yet beatitude partaking in the future beatific vision. The mystical marriage is, in other words, the foretaste of heaven.

5.3.2. BEATITUDE

This part proceeds from the previous assumption that the mystical union is of the same nature as the beatific vision, only lacking its permanence. In this sense, the mystical union can be seen as the end reachable in this present state of life and opening, so to speak, the door to the ultimate end of beatific vision in the afterlife. Aquinas helps us to see that in the beatific vision, it is possible to discern two aspects (vision and beatitude) related to two different powers of the soul (intellect and will). In this part, I would like to consider several more aspects both of the beatitude enjoyed by the will and the theological contemplation of the intellect.

It seems that the beatitude we are concerned with more or less corresponds to the *gustos*, the spiritual delights, since the beatitude, just as the *gustos*, has its source in God directed to man. The *gustos* are experienced in the soul and occasionally, as we have seen, may even overflow to the body. These spiritual delights cause several things in the soul, one of the most notable results is peace or quiet. Teresa showed us that such a peace is experienced for the first time in the fourth dwelling places and she even names a prayer causing it thereafter. Since it was shown above that the mystical marriage can be understood as the participation in the future beatific vision, it seems possible to understand those *gustos*, those spiritual delights, as a participation in the future, delightful beatitude.

What is this beatitude, then? Aquinas understands the beatitude in two senses, as something uncreated and created in man, as shown above. The beatitude is not only the final end but also man's perfection, as created in man it must rest in some kind operation.⁴⁵ 'Life means the operation of the living, by which operation the principle of life is made actual: thus we speak of active and contemplative life, or of a life of pleasure. And in this sense eternal life is said to be the last end.'⁴⁶ Here, Aquinas bases his argument upon the assumption, that 'living' as an operation is the perfection of the living object. He relates the same train of thought to the active and contemplative life and the life of pleasure. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that both the fulfilment of the active life, fulfilment of the life of contemplation and fulfilment of the life of beatitude consist in some kind of operation. Such an operation is also understood as an actualisation of the principle of life. But the principle of life in man is his intellectual soul. Therefore, the final beatitude (*beatitudo*) is not only the final end of man but also the full actualisation of man's soul.

Hence, since it was shown that no operation short of the beatific vision can satisfy man's will

obiectum. Et hoc modo est eius fruitio. Et sic hunc finem intellectus consequitur tanquam potentia agens, voluntas autem tanquam potentia movens ad finem, et fruens fine iam adeptio.' ST IaIIae, q. 11, a. 1, ad 1. This is an important text and I will repeat it several more times to illustrate different aspects of the problem.

45 ST IaIIae, q.3, a. 2.

46 'Alio modo dicitur vita ipsa operatio viventis, secundum quam principium vitae in actum reducit, et sic nominamus vitam activam, vel contemplativam, vel voluptuosam. Et hoc modo vita aeterna dicitur ultimus finis.' ST IaIIae, q. 3, a. 2, ad 1.

fully, it follows that neither the active nor the contemplative life can be deemed to be the full actualisation of man's soul.

Now, let us return back to Teresa's teaching. It seems possible to understand the 'natural end' reached in the third dwelling places to be a 'natural' actualisation of soul's potentiality. Just as Teresa says, such an actualisation, or perfection, is fully within the domain of man's own, natural powers. This 'natural end' consists in a well-ordered life lived in accord with the Gospel. One may ask why only the well-ordered life should be considered as the 'natural end'. Teresa was especially concerned with the life of the soul, and as we have seen in the second chapter, the first two dwelling places are concerned with the 'cleansing' of the senses and passions and gradual subsuming them under the domain of the reason. But by doing so, they are also directed towards their proper operation and therefore towards their proper *telos*. And that is the reason why the 'natural end' is to be understood as the full actualisation of the natural potential of human soul.

In a similar way, the life of contemplation in general, and mystical union in particular, can be understood as the full actualisation of man's soul's potentiality reachable in this present state of life with the help of divine grace. Now, there are two things that need be mentioned. First, Teresa speaks about 'contemplation' from the fourth chambers onward, yet there is a gradation of the spiritual life which can be described as 'ever coming closer to God' or in terms of ever more intimate union between the soul and God. Now, even if Thomas speaks simply about the 'life of contemplation', Teresa makes a subtler distinction. However, there is no logical obstacle why that which counts for contemplation in general should not also count for each of the grades of contemplation. Thus, what was only a hint or hypotheses in the previous chapters turns to be a probable (if not sure) conclusion at this point. The gradual steps of the mystical union are also steps of the gradual actualisation of soul's potentiality. Hence, by reaching the mystical union, man also becomes fully himself.

5.3.3. CONTEMPLATION

What concerns us at this point is Thomas's formulation 'But in men, according to their present state of life, the final perfection is in respect of an operation whereby man is united to God.'⁴⁷ Teresa, apart from the full union, also distinguishes the partial unions of individual powers of the soul. Although she would agree that the final union of the mystical marriage is both the union of the intellect and the will at the same time, the previous stages differ. It is therefore necessary to ask what is the 'operation whereby man is united to God' in the case of the final union of the mystical marriage and in case of the partial unions. Since the final union of the mystical marriage can be understood as the union of all the powers of the soul both within the soul and with God, it follows that it necessarily must be the common act of the intellect and the will. However, the power of the soul mostly stressed in the previous stages is the will. Therefore, it seems that for Teresa, the final union is the act of the intellect and the will, whereas the previous stages of 'becoming united to God' are unthinkable without prayer as Teresa often stresses. Prayer understood as the soul's habitus, is, just like any other habitus, closely related to the will. Prayer is absolutely fundamental in her teaching and no spiritual progress can be made without it. Even if man can by his natural powers come to an intellectual understanding about God, he cannot reach the mystical union without prayer or the will, and so cannot reach the participation in the beatific vision. Aquinas is worth being cited more fully:

But in men, according to their present state of life, the final perfection is in respect of an operation whereby man is united to God: but this operation neither can be continual, nor, consequently, is it one only, because operation is multiplied by being discontinued. And for this reason, in the present state of life, perfect happiness cannot be attained by man. [...] But in the present life, in as far as we fall short of the unity and continuity of that operation, so

47 ST I-II, q. 3, a. 2, ad 4. The full citation in which this statement appears is provided in the text below.

do we fall short of perfect happiness. Nevertheless, it is a participation of happiness: and so much the greater, as the operation can be more continuous and more one.⁴⁸

It is also the will which plays an even more important role than the intellect in the mystical dwelling places. Very often, Teresa mentions the will and love in one breath. Aquinas, in an answer to the objection that the love of God as an act of the will is more excellent than the knowledge of God as the act of the intellect, states: 'Love ranks above knowledge in moving, but knowledge precedes love in attaining.'⁴⁹ Further, he supports this view by stating:

Now it is evident that the desire itself of the end is not the attainment of the end, but is a movement towards the end: while delight comes to the will from the end being present; and not conversely, is a thing made present, by the fact that the will delights in it.⁵⁰

Although the mystical marriage as the state crowning the spiritual life of man should be treated in terms of attainment, the previous stages of the spiritual life are expressed in terms of 'moving' towards this end. Teresa describes this movement as a loving chase referring to the words of the Psalm 42 *Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus*, or the love games of two lovers in the wine cellar or even the hide and seek played between the lovers in the dark streets of a city, all images taken from the *Song of Songs*.⁵¹ Before man reaches the mystical union, the end, he has to search after it and this search is motivated and driven by love, by the will. Since 'love ranks above knowledge in moving', it is why Teresa stresses its importance during the stages of a partial union of the fifth and sixth dwelling places. This also means that the will is the power of the soul which 'moves' man to attain the final end; in other words, the will is the mover of the spiritual life in the mystical stage.

Aquinas further supports Teresa and explains that man is directed towards his final end partly by the intellect, since the imperfect knowledge thereof pre-exists in it, and partly 'through the will, first by love which is the will's first movement towards anything; second, by a real relation of the lover to the thing beloved.'⁵² He continues to explain that the relation between the lover and the beloved is three-fold. Either the beloved is already present and therefore it is not necessary to seek after him, or he is not present but cannot be attained and in such a case is not sought after, or third, it is possible to find the beloved but the beloved is above the capacity of the lover and therefore, cannot be attained straightforwardly and immediately 'and this relation alone causes a search for the end.'⁵³

Now, the middle option is of no concern, but the first and the last are. The search for the beloved as man's final end is the sole motive of the whole spiritual life for, as we have seen previously, even the *via purgativa* is both for Aquinas and Teresa motivated by filial love towards God. The relation of the lover towards the beloved is even more intensively expressed in the unitive stage. Unlike Aquinas, who would postpone the fulfilment of this relation to the afterlife, Teresa argues that the mystical marriage already is such a fulfilment; that after reaching the mystical union man does no

48 'In hominibus autem, secundum statum praesentis vitae, est ultima perfectio secundum operationem qua homo coniungitur Deo, sed haec operatio nec continua potest esse, et per consequens nec unica est, quia operatio intermissione multiplicatur. Et propter hoc in statu praesentis vitae, perfecta beatitudo ab homine haberi non potest. [...] Sed in praesenti vita, quantum deficiamus ab unitate et continuitate talis operationis, tantum deficiamus a beatitudinis perfectione. Est tamen aliqua participatio beatitudinis, et tanto maior, quanto operatio potest esse magis continua et una.' ST IaIIae, q. 3, a. 2, ad 4. [Authors note: I have kept the original English translation in the citation. However, note, that the 'happiness' stands for *beatitudo*. Since the latter expression is much stronger than the simplistic 'happiness', I have decided to use the term 'beatitudo' instead of 'happiness' in my own text.]

49 'Ad quartum dicendum quod dilectio praeminet cognitioni in movendo, sed cognitio praevia est dilectioni in attingendo.' ST IaIIae, q. 3, a. 4, ad 4.

50 'Manifestum est autem quod ipsum desiderium finis non est consecutio finis, sed est motus ad finem. Delectatio autem advenit voluntati ex hoc quod finis est praesens, non autem e converso ex hoc aliquid fit praesens, quia voluntas delectatur in ipso.' ST IaIIae, q. 3, a. 4.

51 See M 5,1,12 5,2,12; 5,4; MC, esp. Ch. 5, 6, 7.

52 'Per voluntatem autem, primo quidem per amorem, qui est primus motus voluntatis in aliquid, secundo autem, per realem habitudinem amantis ad amatum.' ST IaIIae, q. 4, a.3.

53 'Quae sola habitudo facit finis inquisitionem.' Ibid.

longer search after the beloved, for he has already reached him. Teresa writes:

Each day this soul becomes more amazed, for these Persons never seem to leave it any more, but it clearly beholds, in the way that was mentioned, that they are within it. [...] If the soul does not fail God, He will never fail, in my opinion, to make His presence clearly known to it. It has strong confidence that since God has granted this favor He will not allow it to lose the favor.⁵⁴

So, it seems that the operation whereby man is led to be united to God is the specific operation of the will, the *habitus* of prayer, opening a room within one's soul for the gift of contemplation as an act of the intellect. The operation whereby man *actually is united* to God is the operation of the intellect in conjunction with the operation of the will together imperfectly participating in the future glory both under the aspect of contemplation of the truth and enjoyment of the good.

This notion echoes Aquinas's own thought about contemplation. First, he stresses the importance of the intention as an act of the will which opens up the very possibility of reaching the end. Further, he explains that the contemplative life, as regards the essence of action, pertains to the intellect, while as regards the motive or the cause of the action, it pertains to the will. Further, just as Teresa stresses the importance of love towards God in the mystical stage of the spiritual life characterised by contemplation, thus also does Aquinas speak of the contemplative life as consisting in the love of God. Citing Gregory, he says:

Through loving God we are aflame to gaze on His beauty. And since everyone delights when he obtains what he loves, it follows that the contemplative life terminates in delight, which is seated in the affective power, the result being that love also becomes more intense.⁵⁵

Aquinas in the question on contemplation provides another handful of fascinating insights. He states that our love towards God is what urges us to the vision of Him as the first principle.⁵⁶ Although he claims that such contemplation will be perfect in the life to come, he nevertheless assumes that we can reach imperfect contemplation even in this life. He calls it to be an 'inchoate beatitude', that is beatitude beginning in this life but being continued in the life to come.⁵⁷ This assumption hints at a possibility of understanding mystical marriage as the imperfect beatitude, as the participation in the future beatific vision.

Contemplation as a mystical kind of prayer deserves a closer look at the end of this chapter. The previous chapter disclosed that mystical prayer should be understood as the activity of God directed towards man and thus pulling man towards himself: uniting him through contemplation of him. This chapter has been concerned with the question of the final end of man and has revealed that through the process of spiritual growth, man becomes ever more aware that his only and true end, his only and complete happiness is God. Now, if the medium of our reaching this final end is prayer, more specifically supernatural prayer being the activity of God, it follows that God also operates as the final cause of man's happiness. Unlike any other object, towards which man may draw his attention, God alone has the power to draw man to himself, the ultimate beatitude, and he does so through contemplation.

Teresa describes the variants of contemplation in great detail. She even warns against the dangers of being misled by an experience not having its root in God but in the evil one. The grades of contemplation gradually lead from an occasional extraordinary experience to a gradually more

54 '¡Oh, válgame Dios! ¡Cuán diferente cosa es oír estas palabras y creerlas, a entender por esta manera cuán verdaderas son! Y cada día se espanta más esta alma, porque nunca más le parece se fueron de con ella, sino que notoriamente ve, de la manera que queda dicho, que están en lo interior de su alma, en lo muy muy interior, en una cosa muy honda, que no sabe decir cómo es, porque no tiene letras, siente en sí esta divina compañía.' M 7,1,7.

55 'Et propter hoc Gregorius constituit vitam contemplativam in caritate Dei, in quantum scilicet aliquis ex dilectione Dei inardescit ad eius pulchritudinem conspiciendam. Et quia unusquisque delectatur cum adeptus fuerit id quod amat, ideo vita contemplativa terminatur ad delectationem, quae est in affectu, ex qua etiam amor intenditur.' ST IIallae, q. 180, a. 1.

56 ST IIallae, q. 180, a.1, ad 2.

57 ST IIallae, q. 180, a. 4.

intimate (and more steady) union of individual powers of the soul with God. Now, since this stage pertains to the intellect, by the individual powers of the soul is meant the ‘intellective’ powers of the soul, namely the memory, the will and the intellect.

Teresa does not treat the ‘intellective memory’ much, perhaps due to the notoriously bad memory of her own. Or it may be otherwise. T. Dicken in his analyses of John of the Cross provides an insightful description of the ‘active night of the spirit’, which consists in the intellective memory being ‘fixed upon’ God (being united to God) so constantly that man finds a lack of memory capacity for the ordinary, mundane tasks, often resulting in embarrassing situations.¹ Strangely, the description fits Teresa’s proclamations about her own lack of memory perfectly. Although Teresa did not treat the ‘union of the memory’ explicitly in her works, it is contained there *implicitly* by her writing about her own troubles with bad memory.

Further, in the sixth dwelling places, she first distinguishes the spiritual experience according to (albeit not exclusively) the question of which of the powers of the soul ‘enter the union’ and which of them do not. In these chapters, she also makes another important distinction and that is between the imaginative and the ‘intellectual’ vision. The former is a type of vision which makes use of the images stored in man’s memory; it is something intuitively understandable. However, the latter is of more concern, for it is this ‘intellectual vision’ which seems to be the essence of the mystical marriage in the seventh dwelling place.

This intellectual vision does not make use of any images, and yet represents a vision. It is, contrary to the previous one, hardly imaginable precisely due to its lack of images. Also, Teresa writes about the ‘intellectual vision of the blessed Holy Trinity within the very centre of the soul’. She makes the reader sure that it is some kind of knowledge, although it is not knowledge transmitted by the images. This is another way of saying that it is knowledge gained in a different manner than through man’s senses, for the images make use of impressions of the created world and its forms. But God is not created, nor is he graspable through the *species* gained through our sensual apprehension. Therefore, the imaginative vision cannot be means fit for the contemplation of God. Since we hold that the immaterial intellect is capable of grasping the essences of the things and the immaterial notions, it seems to be able to apprehend the immaterial reality, namely God. The intellectual vision seems to be, therefore, the medium through which the intellect directly apprehends the essence of God, namely the most Holy Trinity. Teresa writes:

In this seventh dwelling place the union comes about in a different way: our good God now desires to remove the scales from the soul’s eyes and let it *see* and *understand*, although *in a strange way*, something of the favor He grants it. When the soul is brought into that dwelling place, the Most Blessed Trinity, all three Persons, through an *intellectual vision*, is revealed to it through a certain representation of the truth.²

It means that the gradual degrees of contemplation lead man from being able only to apprehend both the material and immaterial reality through his sensual or sensually bound apprehension to being able to apprehend the immaterial reality through his intellect alone. But, since the intellect is in its cognition dependent on the sensual apprehension, the sensual apprehension and the images and/or *species* would hinder it from being able to do so, unless the memory itself was so fixed on God that it would have effectively ‘forgotten material reality’. The will would tend towards some created good unless it was bound to the ultimate Good by the intellect’s apprehension thereof.

Aquinas is worth citing on this point:

Second, one may be in this life potentially and not with regard to act, that is to say, when the soul is united to the mortal body as its form, yet so as to make use neither of the bodily senses,

1 T. Dicken, *Crucible of Love*, pp. 260–262.

2 ‘Aquí es de otra manera: quiere ya nuestro buen Dios quitarla las escamas de los ojos y que vea y entienda algo de la merced que le hace, aunque es por una manera extraña; y metida en aquella morada, por visión intelectual, por cierta manera de representación de la verdad, se le muestra la Santísima Trinidad, todas tres personas.’ M 7,1,6 [emphases mine].

nor even of the imagination, as happens in rapture; and in this way the contemplation of the present life can attain to the vision of the Divine essence. Consequently the highest degree of contemplation in the present life is that which Paul had in rapture, whereby he was in a middle state between the present life and the life to come.³

This citation shows that even Aquinas recognised some kind of knowledge attainable without the use of bodily senses or imagination and considered such a knowledge to be a kind of revelation. Aquinas argues that even in contemplation making use of the images, we cannot consider the intellectual knowledge to consist in the phantasms themselves but rather in ‘contemplating in them the purity of the intelligible truth.’⁴ Teresa names this ‘vision of the Divine Essence’ the intellectual vision. Unlike Aquinas, she does not consider the rapture to be its highest possible degree. Or it would be more precise to say that she considered the rapture to be the highest possible form of prayer in the *Life*, but not so in the *Interior Castle*, as was shown. Unlike Aquinas, who remained silent after a certain experience, Teresa describes even the last possible stage, the mystical marriage. If Aquinas considered the rapture to be a ‘middle state between the present life and the life to come’, how much more it is true about the mystical marriage.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Aquinas which summarises this chapter aptly:

But on the part of the soul, ere it arrive at this uniformity, its twofold lack of uniformity needs to be removed. First, that which arises from the variety of external things: this is removed by the soul withdrawing from externals, and so the first thing he mentions regarding the circular movement of the soul is *the soul's withdrawal into itself from external objects*. Second, another lack of uniformity requires to be removed from the soul, and this is owing to the discoursing of reason. This is done by directing all the soul's operations to the simple contemplation of the intelligible truth, and this is indicated by his saying in the second place that *the soul's intellectual powers must be uniformly concentrated*, in other words that discoursing must be laid aside and the soul's gaze fixed on the contemplation of the one simple truth. In this operation of the soul there is no error, even as there is clearly no error in the understanding of first principles which we know by simple intuition. Afterwards these two things being done, he mentions third the uniformity which is like that of the angels, for then all things being laid aside, the soul continues in the contemplation of God alone.⁵

It is possible to read this excerpt from Aquinas, commenting on the Areopagite, as an apt summary both of Teresa's teaching on the spiritual life and the topic of this chapter. The first lack of uniformity is removed by ‘entering the castle’, concentrating on the spiritual life, rather than on the ‘things of the world’: on the life of prayer. Once this is done, we have to abandon the ‘discoursing of the reason’, the *pensamiento*, by the will's directing of all of the powers of the soul to the contemplation of God alone, thus gaining not only its own perfection, uniformity within one's self, but also the most perfect union with God attainable in this life, already participating in the life to come and the mystical knowledge resembling the knowledge of angels.

3 ‘Alio modo potest esse aliquis in hac vita potentialiter, et non secundum actum, in quantum scilicet anima eius est corpori mortali coniuncta ut forma, ita tamen quod non utatur corporis sensibus, aut etiam imaginatione, sicut accidit in raptu. Et sic potest contemplatio huius vitae pertingere ad visionem divinae essentiae. Unde supremus gradus contemplationis praesentis vitae est qualem habuit Paulus in raptu, secundum quem fuit medio modo se habens inter statum praesentis vitae et futurae.’ ST IIaIIae, q. 180., a. 5.

4 ST IIaIIae, q. 180, a. 5, ad 2; ad 3.

5 ‘In anima vero, antequam ad istam uniformitatem perveniat, exigitur quod duplex eius difformitas amoveatur. Primo quidem, illa quae est ex diversitate exteriorum rerum, prout scilicet relinquit exteriora. Et hoc est quod primo ponit in motu circulari animae introitum ipsius ab exterioribus ad seipsam. Secundo autem oportet quod removeatur secunda difformitas, quae est per discursum rationis. Et hoc idem contingit secundum quod omnes operationes animae reducuntur ad simplicem contemplationem intelligibilis veritatis. Et hoc est quod secundo dicit, quod necessaria est uniformis convolutio intellectualium virtutum ipsius, ut scilicet, cessante discursu, figatur eius intuitus in contemplatione unius simplicis veritatis. Et in hac operatione animae non est error, sicut patet quod circa intellectum primorum principiorum non erratur, quae simplici intuitu cognoscimus. Et tunc, istis duobus praemissis, tertio ponitur uniformitas conformis Angelis, secundum quod, praetermissis omnibus in sola Dei contemplatione persistit. Et hoc est quod dicit, deinde, sicut uniformis facta, unite, idest conformiter, unitis virtutibus, ad pulchrum et bonum manuducitur.’ ST IaIIae, q. 180, a. 6, ad 2.

6. Mystical knowledge

The previous chapter ended with a description of the intellectual vision, more specifically with the intellectual vision experienced in the final stage of the spiritual life. It was shown that such a vision is not mediated by any kind of sensual or sensually bound images and/or *species*.

But, Teresa treats the two kinds of visions – the imaginative and the intellectual – in greater detail in the sixth dwelling places. Further, she acknowledges the experience of the intellectual vision even before reaching the final dwelling place. Both the imaginative and intellectual visions, just as the other kinds of mystical phenomena, transmit some kind of knowledge both of God and of other realities, often mundane.

To be able to understand the final stage of the spiritual life, the intellectual vision of the Most Holy Trinity within one's own 'centre of the soul', I deem it necessary to ask, first, about the nature of this supernatural knowledge. It would be possible to argue without prior consideration that such a knowledge is a miracle and a special kind of revelation. Although I am prepared to admit the latter, I am not sure about the former assumption. Such a straightforward answer sounds too easy a solution for several reasons. First, too many mystics of the Church have reported both similar mystical phenomena and mystical knowledge. Second, even within one mystic's life, in this case in the life of St Teresa of Avila, the mystical knowledge is gained too regularly and often to be labelled as 'miraculous' just like that. Rather, I see two pressing questions: first, how it is possible to gain such knowledge and whether it is or is not somehow enabled by our own nature, and second, why it is given – is there not some special reason why the mystics gain such a knowledge relatively regularly while the non-mystics do not or only occasionally (e.g., for the purpose of conversion)?

The question about mystical knowledge leads to the understanding of the mystical marriage and shows it in yet another perspective and gives the whole of the spiritual struggle as described by St Teresa new and deeper meaning. Therefore, I treat the question of mystical knowledge before the mystical marriage.

6.1. THE POSSIBILITY AND IMPORTANCE OF MYSTICAL KNOWLEDGE

6.1.1. THE MYSTICAL PHENOMENA

The question of mystical knowledge needs be treated on the background of Teresa's text. It is, therefore, necessary to provide a more detailed description of individual mystical phenomena as depicted in the sixth dwelling places of the *Interior Castle* and show that the majority of them have their counterpart also in the *Life*.

This spiritual espousal of the sixth chambers also brings with itself great understanding which in its clarity and suddenness surpasses any ordinary kind of [natural] knowledge. Besides this, Teresa warns about the possibility of being deceived by the devil who would (and which is of interest to this article) 'darken the intellect'.⁶

The ordinary senses are suspended, so in the case of 'spiritual seeing' it doesn't mean one uses his physical eyes. Nor is it a question of imagination, i.e., this kind of seeing is not identical with the images fabricated by our own imagination. Teresa does discern between 'imaginative' and

⁶ M 5,4,4; 5,4,8.

‘intellectual’ vision, though.⁷

She treats the topic of both kinds of visions in chapter eight of the sixth dwelling places. Interestingly, apart from speaking about the bodily eyes she also speaks about the ‘eyes of the soul’.⁸ The intellectual vision pertains, according to Teresa, solely to the soul itself: it is an experience completely extra-sensual. This means there is nothing the *ratio* or language can build on – no sensations, no images. Therefore, through this vision the soul cannot be deceived. It is an experience of the nearness of God that is somehow extra-sensually perceived in the depth of one’s soul and it brings along the mystical knowledge of God, strong love for Him, and purity of conscience.⁹

Albeit the intellectual vision is completely extra-sensual, the imaginative vision pertains to the ‘inner eyes’. According to Teresa, this vision comes through the mediation of the inner light coming from the Sun (i.e., God) for it cannot be a mere self-made fantasy as it far surpasses both the capacity of our imagination and our intellect. It can be so powerful that it carries a person out of his senses. Compared to the products of our imagination, these latter are like mere dead things.¹⁰ This imaginative vision, however, ‘stirs all faculties and senses with a great fear and tumult.’¹¹ Afterwards, the soul is suddenly calm and in a moment gains a deep knowledge of reality and God’s supremacy. Such a deeper knowledge of God always goes hand in hand with a deeper knowledge of oneself.¹²

Further, St Teresa also describes ‘inner locutions’. Be they true, they make such an impression on the soul that their message remains imprinted in the memory for a very long time, sometimes even for a lifetime.¹³

Then comes one of the unpleasant mystical experiences by which one suffers a lot. St Teresa speaks about a ‘darkening of the understanding’ which the soul’s incapability to discern the truth and is inclined to believe anything that is being presented to it through the imagination, even to the point of believing that it is not loved by God. This state even prevents mental prayer for the faculties are incapable of it.¹⁴

When trying to describe the famous phenomenon of *transverberation*, or the wound of love, St Teresa, in search of words, takes refuge again in making a simile using an ordinary sensation. She speaks about God’s ‘whisper’ which cannot be overheard for all the faculties are totally still, although they are not (contrary to the previous dwelling places) suspended. A more thorough description is, again, provided in the latter chapters, namely in the eleventh, where the description of a very intense pain is given. Although this pain has an effect on the body, it is experienced in the centre of the soul. It is so intense that for a moment all of the faculties are not suspended but made to concentrate only on what is the most important, that is the vivid knowledge of God. The intellect is very alive and ‘the reasoning faculty is in such a condition that the soul is not the master of it’.¹⁵

Another phenomenon mentioned is rapture, during which neither faculties nor senses work. Even when this kind of ecstasy ends, the will and the intellect remain recollected so much so that the intellect is unable to understand anything ‘that doesn’t lead to awakening the will to love’ and the will itself is completely attached to God.¹⁶

In the flight of the spirit, the soul completely loses control of itself. The senses and faculties must obey what they are commanded by God. This experience goes hand in hand with the seeing of the uncreated light in which one gains knowledge surpassing in its volume and quality any other kind

7 M 6,1,1; 6,3,12; 6,4–11.

8 M 6,8,2.

9 M 6,8,6; 6,8,3; 6,8,4.

10 M 6,9,4; 6,9,5; 6,9,7.

11 M 6,9,10.

12 M 6,9,10; 6,9,16; 6,9,15.

13 M 6,3,7.

14 M 6,1,9; 6,1,13.

15 M 6,2,3, 6,2,5, 6,11,2, 6,11,3, 6,11,4, 6,11,2–3, 6,11,3.

16 M 6,4,9, 6,4,14.

of knowledge. It is according to the description beyond the imagination or mind (*pensamiento*). In these descriptions, St Teresa for the first time speaks about 'the eyes of the soul'. The intensity of this experience is such that she is not sure if the soul actually remains in the body or not. It also experiences a total loss of the senses. This flight of the spirit causes, besides improvement of the virtues, greater understanding, self-knowledge, and humility. Everything gained through this experience remains deeply engraved in the memory.¹⁷

Due to the more intimate union with the will of God, man's soul is strengthened to suffer whatever temptations or trials may come, although this resoluteness may be exchanged with a completely contrary state of mind, that of absolute cowardliness. This may happen when the soul is left as if alone. These changing conditions lead to the 'soul's annihilation within itself and deeper knowledge of God's mercy and grandeur'.¹⁸ Although St Teresa does not explain what she means by 'annihilation within itself' I suggest it might be understood as the annihilation of self-will, or perhaps wilfulness.

In this stage of spiritual development, strong desires to see God come to the soul. St Teresa, however, warns that even these desires may be misused by the devil and gives advice for proper discernment and indeed advises her sisters to try and distract themselves from these desires should they be too strong and if God permits, for 'there is every reason to be conformed to the will of God.'¹⁹

Another mystical experience is that of the inner fire which sometimes leads to the gift of tears in prayer. Besides distinguishing between true and fabricated experience, St Teresa also gives her opinion about the nature of this experience. According to her, this kind of bitter-sweet prayer is a kind of deep union of the faculties, which, although united, also remain free for enjoyment. This enjoyment even touches the senses, despite their not understanding what is happening. All of this results in the deep desire of the soul to give thanks and praise to our Lord, towards whom all of its activity is directed. This praise rises from the interior (i.e., centre) of the soul and it brings forth great jubilation. Sometimes one may resemble a madman, although during this experience one is not drawn out of his senses, nor does he lose his reason completely.²⁰

The nearer the soul approaches its final end the more it is being cleansed from anything that impedes the vision of God. This cleansing enables the soul to 'see more clearly', that is to know God better. However, a better knowledge of God also means a better knowledge of oneself. In the sixth dwelling places another experience is precisely that of seeing oneself in the light of God. In respect of experiencing God's majesty and goodness, the memory shows the person's past sins, ungratefulness, and indifference in a rather unpleasant spiritual experience which is hard to bear and is sufferable only thanks to the love the soul had already acquired towards the Lord.²¹

Further, St Teresa speaks about the prayer concerning the humanity of Christ and gives an example of the meditation upon the Way of the Cross. She thinks that the soul is no more capable of a mere (discursive) meditation in this stage of spiritual development but the images from the life of Christ usually lead it to perfect contemplation, thus understanding the mysteries in a more perfect manner by the intellect. This deeper understanding causes the mysteries to be ever more deeply printed into the memory. These images cause a strong desire for the person to suffer for the One who has suffered so much.²²

While treating the question of the mystical knowledge, it would be worth realising that for the description of many of those experiences Teresa quite often uses the parallel to sensual apprehension. Thus, she speaks about 'spiritual hearing' (locutions), 'spiritual seeing' or the 'eyes of the soul' (visions), the 'spiritual touch' (the fire of love/transverberation) and spiritual 'taste' (the

17 M 6,5,3, 6,5,7, 6,5,8, 6,5,12, 6,5,10, 6,5,11.

18 M 6,6,4, 6,6,5.

19 M 6,6,6.

20 M 6,6,10, 6,6,12, 6,6,11, 6,6,13.

21 M 7,1,2, 7,1,4.

22 M 6,7,11, 6,7,12.

ecstasies). Besides, she also speaks about ‘impulses’ proceeding from the seventh dwelling place of which the source is God. These touch the ‘senses of the soul’ and result in supernatural knowledge. All of this happens only in the fifth (albeit to a lesser degree already in the fourth) and sixth dwelling places.

My first assumption, therefore, is that supernatural knowledge in a way mirrors natural knowledge. Just as there are some *sensibilia*, of which their impression is apprehended and processed by (inner) senses and *ratio*, so there are ‘*sensibilia*’, namely ‘impulses from God’, which are perceived and processed through the ‘senses of the soul’ while resulting in supernatural knowledge.

6.1.2. ‘IMPULSES FROM GOD’ AND THE POSSIBILITY OF MYSTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Upon the previous description of the various kinds of mystical experiences, several points may be concluded. First, the different kinds of experience pertain to different faculties of the soul. Second, the experience mediates a special kind of knowledge. The source of this knowledge, and *ipso facto* of the ‘soul’s perception’, is God. Third, the knowledge is mediated to the soul through some mysterious entity called ‘spiritual impulses’. Fourth, the knowledge is of God, one’s self and/or other entities. Fifth, the soul may receive ‘fake impulses’ not having their source in God but in the devil. Sixth, those ‘fake impulses’ are, nevertheless perceived in the soul in a way very much similar way to those having their source in God. Teresa provides directives to discern between the former and the latter. Since the question about the nature and purpose of mystical knowledge is more general, I will not treat the question of ‘discernment’ here. However interesting it is, it is not important for our topic and can easily be studied in Teresa’s own texts and in the secondary literature which mentions it often.

Now, to tackle the question about the mystical knowledge, I deem it necessary or at least useful, to revise basic ideas about natural knowledge, more specifically, to revise what Aquinas says about the way of one’s intellection. I have shown already that Teresa’s frame of mind is very much rooted in scholastic psychology. To be more precise, her texts do not suggest she was following any kind of the contemporary discussion between the renowned theologians from among the Jesuits or Dominicans or Franciscans. Her vocabulary is very simple, she uses expressions such as ‘faculties of the soul’ or describes the phantasy and sensual memory in such a rudimentary way that she seems to be closer in her thought to Aquinas than any of her contemporaries. This is one of the chief reasons to read her text in the perspective of Aquinas’s own teaching. This part, therefore, returns back to the Aquinas’s psychology, mainly as contained in the *Summa*.

Now, Aquinas states that our own intellection is bound to the apprehension of material objects through the outer and inner senses which produce an entity called *species sensatas*. These are forms of the things abstracted from the individual features which represent, so to say, the basic unit of thought. In the case of the *species sensatas*, man is inclined to consider them to be ‘inner images’. The problem is that they are not, strictly speaking, images, even though they may be connected to images stored in the imagination. But one may have images only of the material objects. However, man’s perception is not only of the material objects. We also perceive a lot of ‘things’ that are not, per se, material.

This can be well illustrated upon the example of a ‘man playing with his child on the playground’. Since man is, unlike animals, endowed with the intellect, will, intellectual memory and free volition (*liberum arbitrium*),²³ his movements and acts (or lack of acts) are unpredictable. When we apprehend man, we do not perceive only his physical appearance, but also his mood, his actions (or lack of actions), his movements (and lack of movements). Upon such an apprehension, we further assume about his further qualities, for example, we assume that the man playing with his

23 I am fully aware of the multitude of questions connected to the ‘freedom of will’ or ‘free volition’. A separate treatise could be devoted to this question alone and would lead us too far from the original topic. Therefore, let us be content with Teresa’s assumption that man is free. Also, upon a thorough study of Aquinas’s texts pertaining to the will and freedom, I am deeply convinced he did think man to be free.

child on the playground is kind, attentive, caring and fun. We can even make a conclusion about more abstract qualities, like justice or injustice. Such qualities are in themselves non-material, yet we are in their perception bound to material reality. I have to see the man to be able to make a judgement about his character. Or I do not have to see him but can read about him. Seemingly, knowledge gained in this manner does not seem to be bound to sensual apprehension – I do not see the man himself. However, a closer look shows us that even my reading about him is mediated by something materially apprehensible (book/screen/letters) used as signs directly representing man himself.

But, the abstraction must result in a different kind of medium of thought, for the material, sensually apprehensible entity (computer screen and letters) is only a sign of non-material entity (the kindness of the man about whom I am reading). In another words, I perceive several realities at once. I can see the computer screen and I know about its size and shape and at the same time, through its mediacy, I know about the kindness of that man. Since the former knowledge is gained through the mediacy of *species sensatas*, the latter needs another mediator, the form of non-material entity, which Aquinas calls the *species intelligibiles*. Both are called *species*, and since the latter cannot be an image (for I cannot have an inner image of ‘justice’), nor can the former be an image.

Now, if the human intellect is capable of creating the *species intelligibiles* during the process of abstraction from the immaterial reality, which is nevertheless still in some respect bound to the material reality (for example, creating the *species* of ‘kindness’ assumed upon the apprehension of the material reality of a man playing at the playground with his children), that is, bound to the movements and acts of a specific man in a specific time and space, it is possible to assume that man is also able to gain knowledge of the immaterial, spiritual reality, based on his spiritual experience.

At this point, however, I am still not referring to mystical knowledge, nor to mystical/supernatural experience. As was shown, Teresa discerns between the natural and the supernatural spiritual life. Even though she treats the supernatural one more extensively and writes about the possible mystical experiences to a great detail, that does not exclude some kind of spiritual experience from the natural, or purgative, stage of the spiritual life. On the contrary, she deals with the topic of prayer and spiritual struggle also in the first three dwelling places as was shown in the first part. It is therefore necessary to assume that even those are spiritual experiences, although of a different and less impressive kind. Yet, spiritual experiences they are: they are the experiences of prayer, of redirecting one’s life towards the natural spiritual end consisting in a well-ordered life, of God’s goodness. Since the first three dwelling places are connected also to the prayer of meditation, the ‘result’ of the meditation should be considered as a kind of spiritual experience. This should be so, for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the right state of mind and the right attitude are needed. What is more, the meditation is not identical with the conclusions of a mere rational process and the knowledge gained through it need not necessarily be the sum of individuals put together.

This is to show that apart from supernatural spiritual experiences we should also distinguish natural spiritual experiences. Now, based upon the previous discussion about the natural non-spiritual experiences of immaterial reality, I would like to treat the question of the way we gain natural spiritual experience. At first glance, it would seem that such an experience is not bound to a sensory apprehension – we do not normally encounter an angel playing with the children at the playground. Yet, at second glance, it is not so. Unless we reach the ‘mystical realm’, our spiritual experience is always bound in a certain way also to sensual apprehension – reading the words of Scripture, praying the Divine Office, receiving the sacraments,²⁴ participating in the spiritual dance of the liturgy when it is the experience connected to God or we may experience more frightening spiritual experiences (e.g., hearing strange sounds, witnessing peculiar events) when they are not connected to God but to some demon.

24 Note that St Thomas writing on the Sacraments stresses the importance of their being sensually perceptible. Cf. In Sent IV, d. 1 q. 1, a.1, ad q1a 1.

The situation of natural spiritual experience differs from the situation of the apprehension of the man playing with his child. In his case, we assume his qualities by apprehending himself or through the report of himself, a living *person* and his acts, whereas in the case of natural spiritual experience we assume about the qualities of the ‘other’ through material *objects* (Scripture/flying forks) and/or actions that are our own (reading the Scripture). However, just like in the case of the man playing with his child, so it is also in the case of natural spiritual experience that knowledge of the other can be gained through the mediacy of something corporeal and the *species intelligibiles*, for we cannot gain any *species sensatas* either of God or an angel, since both are spiritual (i.e., immaterial) substances. Or to be more precise, we can gain the *species sensatas* of the mediatory objects but not of the spiritual entity itself. The knowledge gained through natural spiritual experience could be named ‘natural spiritual knowledge’. We can gain knowledge about God in a natural way, yet since it is gained making use of the *species* created through the abstraction from the materially bound apprehension and further rational reflection (e.g., abstraction, deduction, etc.), they do not seem to be altogether adequate means to know God himself.²⁵

Since God is not the only spiritual being, as there also are the angels, a spiritual experience, both natural and supernatural, need not necessarily be of God. To decide whether a spiritual experience comes from God or not, we have to consider the ‘actions’ and ‘fruits’ of those actions of the spiritual entity. Or to be more precise, we have to, according to Teresa, consider the nature of the influence those acts bear upon our own soul.

To recapitulate, it seems that the soul can gain some kind of natural knowledge also about spiritual entities or spiritual reality through the mediacy of the *species intelligibiles* which are still in a certain respect bound to the sensual apprehension of material reality, although this material reality either only signifies or symbolises the spiritual one.

But St Teresa in her account of the mystical experiences of the sixth dwelling places provides an account of the knowledge of the spiritual entities bound to material externals *in no way*. This kind of knowledge is not gained through sensual apprehension and/or through abstraction based on the sensual apprehension. Such a knowledge is called ‘mystical’. It is noteworthy that mystical knowledge need not necessarily be of God and what is even more striking is that it can be fake, that is, not coming from God for the purpose of salvation but coming from the evil one for the purpose of destruction. Since it is so difficult to distinguish the source of those experiences, it seems that the way of the ‘soul’s perception’ of the spiritual realities must in both cases be very similar. It also hints that both God and evil spirit(s) use some kind of medium to transmit the coveted knowledge. Since the two types of spiritual experiences resemble each other so much that it is difficult to tell them apart, the medium used must be of the same kind. Therefore, it is necessary to ask whether there is any medium of thought which need not be necessarily dependent on material reality. The *species intelligibiles* seem to be the only candidate, for even in the case of the ‘natural’ *species intelligibiles* (e.g., ‘justice’), the *species* are not bound to a specific material object.

Now, let us proceed in several steps. Since the *species intelligibiles* are not directly but only indirectly bound to material objects, the question is whether they could be received without material reality at all. I ask this question for a specific purpose or rather with another question in mind. What are the ‘impulses from God’ which Teresa describes in the sixth dwelling places, connects them to individual mystical experiences compared to the natural sensual apprehension, and writes about them as mediating the mystical knowledge? Could they not be *species*, namely the *intellectual species*, which need not be bound to material objects at all?

Perhaps they could if there was a part of the human soul fittingly created for the apprehension of immaterial reality.²⁶ Since immaterial reality surpasses, according to St Thomas, the material

²⁵ An excellent account of the inadequacy of the natural way of knowledge in relation to God is provided by J. Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, pp. 258, 267–278.

²⁶ This is true even if the knowledge of the bodies, movements, and actions of the immaterial living entities is bound to sensual apprehension only indirectly.

one, because it is not limited by matter, time, or space, the part of the human soul capable of apprehending immaterial reality has to be immaterial itself. The intellect seems to be, according to St Thomas, the only candidate for the mediator between the soul and God since it is in one of its acts totally immaterial and independent of corporeity, being independent of any physical organ.²⁷ Moreover, it is due to this feature of the human intellect that St Thomas enumerates the human being both among the animals and among the spiritual substances.²⁸

Now, immaterial human intellect seems to be able, due to its immateriality and its belonging among the spiritual substances, to receive ‘apprehension’ from the spiritual realm, which is further supported by St Thomas’s thesis about God providing for the lack of sensual apprehension after the separation of the soul from the body by directly pouring the *species intelligibiles* into the separated intellect.²⁹

If the human intellect while connected to the body *was not* able to receive the *species intelligibiles* directly from God at all, then it would follow that either

- a. The intellect would not be able to receive them even after its separation from the body, or
- b. There would have to be a substantial change on the part of the intellect after the death of the body.

The first is contrary to St Thomas’s notion, and the second would lead to a distortion of the identity of the subject. The intellective soul after its separation from the dead body would be a completely different entity from the intellective soul which had inhabited the body before.

Now, the human intellective soul remains the same before and after separation from the body and even while in body it is independent of the body in a certain respect. Further, the soul is able to receive the *species intelligibiles* from God after its separation from the body. Therefore, it must be able to receive the *species intelligibiles* directly from God even while it is in the body. In such a case, we can assume that the ‘impulses from God’ described by St Teresa could be taken for the *species intelligibiles*. Even though the intellect normally needs the sensual apprehension of the material or materially bound entities to gain any knowledge, there is no material impediment on the part of the intellect itself that could disable it from receiving the species directly from God. This point can be further supported by further speculation based on the question of the self-knowledge of the intellect. Aquinas is convinced that the intellect knows itself through its own act.³⁰

God and knowledge of God is man’s ultimate end which is usually called the beatific vision and is reached only post-mortem under specific conditions (sanctity). If man is to reach this end, it must be somehow ‘grounded’ in the essence of the human being. The question is where in the human essence it is ‘encoded’.

The immediate answer that comes to mind is ‘in the DNA’. As with many other immediate answers, this seems to fail us after a brief revision thereof. If man is the unity of the body and the intellective soul which surpasses the body in some respect and moreover the body shares in the act of being of the soul and not vice versa, then it follows that the DNA, which is something material, is insufficient to explain and contain the whole of ‘human essence’. It can explain the corporeal

27 Cf. *De ente et essentiali*. ST I, q. 76, esp. a. 1, ad 1, ad 4. James Robb, St Thomas and the Infinity of Human Beings, *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 55 (1981), 118–125. A. Pegis, *St Thomas and the Problem*, Chapter IV: St Thomas and the Problem of the soul. Guyla Klima, ‘Aquinas on the Immateriality of the Human Soul and the Immateriality of the Human Intellect’ (New York: Fordham University), pp. 9–10, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/gsas/phil/klima/FILES/Aquinas-on-Soul-and-Intellect.pdf>. J. Greth, *Elementa philosophiae aristotelico-thomisticae*. Additionally, see R. Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human*.

28 Cf. *De ente* IV. An interesting discussion on the human soul being enumerated among the spiritual substances while being also enumerated among the corporeal substances, see J. Etzwiller, ‘Man as Embodied Spirit’, 358–377. J. Lehrberger, ‘The Anthropology of Aquinas’s *De ente et essentia*’, 829–847.

29 ‘Ad tertium dicendum quod anima separata non intelligit per species innatas; nec per species quas tunc abstrahit; nec solum per species conservatas, ut obiectio probat, sed per species ex influenza divini luminis participatas, quarum anima fit particeps sicut et aliae substantiae separatae, quamvis inferiori modo. Unde tam cito cessante conversione ad corpus, ad superiora convertitur. Nec tamen propter hoc cognitio non est naturalis, quia Deus est auctor non solum influentiae gratuiti luminis, sed etiam naturalis.’ ST I, q. 89 a. 1 ad 3.

30 ST I, q. 87. QDV 10.

part and that which is immediately united to the corporeity, but it cannot ‘encode’ the intellect, since the effect cannot be higher than the cause.³¹

Since the ‘beatific vision’ as the final end does not contain in itself any material aspect, then it must pertain to the intellect, it must be somehow ‘encoded’ there. Now, if the intellect knows itself directly through its own act, as Aquinas claims,³² it follows that it also has to be able to know directly that which pertains to this part; in this case, the intellect must be able to know that ‘man is created for the final beatitude’.

Now, the species – both *sensatas* and *intelligibiles* – are forms and as such could also be taken for basic units of thought upon which man grasps the universal notions. St Thomas, apart from *notiones*, distinguishes also the *rationes*. It is not easy to distinguish between these two categories as it seems that they could be translated with the same word – the notions. Nevertheless, the text of St Thomas could be read in such a way that the *notiones* are understood as well-distinguished and thoroughly known or grasped notions, the knowledge of which man gains through intentional rational discursive thought, that is, the ‘clear notions’. Whereas the ‘*rationes*’ may be seen as ‘obscured’, being partly known notions present in man’s mind.

Now, it seems that the ‘beatitude as the final end’ does not belong among the most basic units of thought, but to something more complex. Therefore, it needs to belong either among the ‘*notiones*’ or ‘*rationes*’. Since the knowledge thereof is not immediate as our daily experience shows, and since it needs some effort and toil on the part of the thinking subject to come to the knowledge of this truth, it seems this likeness must belong among the ‘*rationes*’. Now, even the ‘*rationes*’ cannot become present in the mind just like that but have to be mediated by *species*.

Since we believe that man’s final end is the beatific vision, this must be ‘engraved’ in or be ‘a part of’ human nature, namely in the intellect as a ‘*ratio*’ based on the *species*. Since these *species* cannot be abstracted from anything material, they must be the *species intelligibiles*. There still remains a question regarding how it is possible. I suggest that the beatific vision as the final beatitude is ‘impressed’ into the intellect directly by God,³³ possibly at the moment of conception.³⁴

Now, if we follow this line of speculation a little further, it follows that the *ratio* that is impressed in the beatific vision as the final end is where the possibility *to know* God is grounded. Second, even though it makes a huge difference for man himself whether he is given some ‘knowledge’ through the impressed *rationes* through *species intelligibiles* as an embryo or when a fully matured man, it does not make any real difference when we are considering the *principle*, much less so from the point of the Eternal God. If, therefore, God can impress some *species intelligibiles* and *rationes* into the human intellective soul while one is a tiny baby in the mother’s womb, there is no reason why he could not do so while man is fully grown. Therefore, if we hold that certain immaterial truths are part of our nature, part of the way we are created,³⁵ mystical knowledge is possible.

31 I have made use of the healthy basis of R. Pasnau’s argument, that if we understand a man to be the unity of body and soul, we cannot argue for the identity of a ‘human being’ only from the standpoint of DNA analyses. If we accept St Thomas’s conclusion that the human soul is immaterial, then the DNA analysis refers only to the body itself, not to the soul, therefore, only to one component of a human being. R. Pasnau originally uses this argument in connection to early-term abortion. Although I am not in favour of his conclusions; the first part of the argument is sound. Cf. Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, the whole of chapter 4, pp. 100–120 (especially pp. 107–120).

32 ST I, q. 87., a. 1.

33 M. Cuddeback treats in his article primarily the question of human knowledge of truth as a participant in the Truth of God. His argument is based not only on the *Summa* but also on some other texts, for example, *Questio disputata De Spir Creat* 10. Although he does not ask the question ‘how’, he mentions explicitly the ‘impress [impressio]’ of the First Truth and first principles on the human intellect. Further, he adds ‘Aquinas describes the natural law as an *impressio* in us of the divine light, a divine instruction that moves to the good’. Matthew Cuddeback, ‘Thomas Aquinas on Divine Illumination and the Authority of the First Truth’, *Nova et Vetera* 7, English ed., No. 3 (2009): 579–602, (pp. 590–598).

34 Or at the moment of the intellective soul being created in the body, should we take seriously St Thomas’s account of gradual animation, cf. ST I, q. 76 a. 3 ad 3, q. 118 a. 2 ad 2.

35 M. Cuddeback based on the reading of J. Ratzinger’s *On Conscience* argues, states that ‘Every person possesses a “primordial knowledge” of truth that is “implanted”, “stamped”, and “instilled” by the Creator.’ Cuddeback, ‘Thomas Aquinas on Divine Illumination’, pp. 579, 581.

When St Teresa speaks about the ‘impulses’ proceeding from God into the soul and further compares various mystical experiences to sensual apprehension, we might suggest that these ‘impulses’ themselves be compared to sensory apprehension.³⁶ In the case of natural knowledge, it is the active intellect which abstracts from the matter of the object perceived and from the specific conditions, and enlightens the passive intellect so that it can grasp the universal.³⁷ In Teresa’s imagery mystical knowledge mediated by mystical experience resemble sensory apprehension. We could consider mystical knowledge in this perspective, only this time the perceived object would not pertain to the world but be God or some of his aspects. The difference is that instead of the passive intellect being enlightened by the active intellect, it is being enlightened by the light of the divine intellect, which enlightens the contemplating soul, that is, the soul turned from the passing material reality which is focused on the everlasting immaterial Reality. Since God himself is immaterial, omnipresent and everlasting, the necessity abstraction falls away, for there is no reason for it. Further, the knowledge of him cannot be mediated by the *species sensatas*, but it is thinkable to consider God directly pouring knowledge into the intellect through the mediacy of *species intelligibiles impressa*. ‘Yet intellectual knowledge does not consist in the phantasms themselves, but in our contemplating in them the purity of the intelligible truth and this not only in natural knowledge, but also in that which we obtain by revelation.’³⁸

6.2. TERESA AND AQUINAS: CONTEMPLATION AND MYSTICAL KNOWLEDGE

The cruciality of contemplation comes to the fore once again. In the chapter about prayer I have shown that the prayer of contemplation has several modes and (apart from the exceptions) is connected to the supernatural stage of the spiritual life being given by God himself. In the previous section I have provided an argument for the possibility of mystical knowledge being rooted in the nature of the human person or more precisely being enabled by the intellectual soul of man. This argument proceeded from a detailed description of the mystical experiences of the sixth dwelling places, precisely due to their subtlety. However, Teresa does not limit mystical knowledge only to these ecstatic experiences. That is to say, she hints that man may receive supernatural knowledge also apart from them. But in any case, she reserves mystical knowledge to the supernatural stage of spiritual life. As I have shown in the chapter about prayer, the mystical stage of the spiritual life is characterised by contemplation. The goal is to achieve permanent prayer, that is, permanent contemplation. Therefore, mystical knowledge is received (if it is received) within the context of contemplation. And it is in this field where we can find more striking resemblances between Teresa and Aquinas.

First of all, I would like to mention several observations of a prominent scholar on Aquinas, J.-P. Torrell, regarding Aquinas’s treatment of contemplation and ‘infused knowledge’. First, it is St Thomas’s conviction that the ultimate end [of theology] is the contemplation of the first truth in the fatherland.³⁹ Torrell understands such a contemplation as knowledge completely set apart which is the end of theology, which is identified with the final end of man. Further, he sees with St Thomas such knowledge as the perfection of a knowing subject. However, he does not hesitate to stress that such a knowledge is always and to a large extent connected to love; indeed, it is rooted in the very love of God.⁴⁰ Concerning specifically the mystical knowledge granted by God, he

36 Paul Murray, OP, mentions St Thomas’s *In De Div Nom* and the *In Psalmos 33*, where St Thomas’s treatment of ‘mystical knowledge’ stresses the experiential side. ‘The word “experience” itself Aquinas clearly borrows from the vocabulary on the senses.’ Paul Murray, OP, ‘Aquinas at Prayer: The Interior Life of a ‘Mystic on Campus’’, in *Logos 14:1* (winter 2011), 38–65 (p. 45).

37 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, ST I, q. 79. M. Cuddeback does not forget to remind us that even the light of the active intellect is derived from the light of the divine intellect. Cuddeback, ‘Thomas Aquinas on Divine Illumination’, pp. 591, 597.

38 ‘Sed tamen intellectualis cognitio non sistit in ipsis phantasmatis, sed in eis contemplatur puritatem intelligibilis veritatis. Et hoc non solum in cognitione naturali, sed etiam in eis quae per revelationem cognoscimus.’ ST IIaIIæ, q. 180, a. 5, ad 2.

39 ‘Contemplatio primae veritatis in patria.’ In Sent I, *Prologue* a. 3.

40 Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality in St Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), pp. 7, 10, 12.

marks that it procures judgement by connaturality. '[...] The one enlightened by the gift of wisdom possesses an intimate familiarity with divine things that the theologian cannot procure merely by his pure science.'⁴¹

I would like to point out the resemblance of Teresa's own teaching to the above-mentioned ideas. First, concerning the 'contemplation of the first truth' as infused knowledge completely set apart is similar to Teresa's own understanding of contemplation as infused prayer mediating [mystical] knowledge having its roots in God, for such a knowledge is completely set apart, as was shown in the previous sections, since it is knowledge gained without any connection to sensory apprehension. Second, the description of the seventh dwelling place shows that the fullness of contemplation reached in this dwelling place is understood by Teresa both as the final end of man reachable in this state of life and it is the apex of what she calls 'mystical theology'. Third, such a state is also for Teresa the perfection of the knowing subject as has been shown several times already, for it vents into the full actualisation of one's own soul's potential. Fourth, just as for Aquinas this kind of knowledge is connected to love and rooted in the very love of God, so it is for Teresa. Both in the description of the individual dwelling places and in the chapter about prayer I have shown that from the fourth dwelling places onwards Teresa stresses love and loving over 'knowing' and she emphasises the role of the will. Fifth, during the unitive stage of the spiritual life, that is, from the fifth to the seventh dwelling places, just as the union between the soul and God is more intimate, so also the soul gains ever growing intimacy with the divine things, as Aquinas states. Further, both the accounts of St Teresa and St Thomas make it clear that contemplation, certain kinds of prayer, and also mystical knowledge are already connected to a great spiritual enjoyment far surpassing any corporeal pleasure,⁴² so this adds to the resemblance of both.

There is more of Aquinas's thought worth mentioning here. First, following St Thomas and the well-known structure of the *Summa*, which follows the *exitus* from God and *reditus* back to Him, it is interesting to realise that the question about rapture can be found in the third part where one is already on the return back to God. M. Wadell argues in this way. He is convinced that St Thomas sees the knowledge gained through rapture as the peak of all knowledge, that is, he understands mystical knowledge to seal the natural one. Although, based on the text of St Teresa I do not limit the gain of such a knowledge solely to the rapture, Wadell's basic intuition seems to point in the right direction.⁴³ Moreover, this third part of the *Summa* had not been finished due to St Thomas's famous vision of the other reality, possibly by his gaining mystical knowledge which stupefied him to silence.⁴⁴ So, Aquinas wrote about rapture but not more. For Teresa, however, rapture belongs among the ecstatic mystical experiences contained in the sixth dwelling places. In other words, rapture belongs to the pre-final stage not to the final stage of the mystical marriage. In this sense, she goes in her description of the spiritual experience *beyond* Aquinas.

Second, both in St Teresa's work and in St Thomas, the return to God cannot even begin if one does not turn away from 'the world' and cannot reach the end without prayer. This 'turn from the world' can be understood not only, but also, as a turning from the natural way of knowledge to knowledge gained through meditation, contemplation, and – God willing – to mystical knowledge received as a pure gift, 'the participated likeness thereof'.⁴⁵

41 J.-P. Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality*, p. 15.

42 Cf. Teresa of Avila, M IV. Although she regularly refers to the spiritual delights throughout the whole scope of the mystical dwelling places, it is in the fourth where she provides the basic distinction between the 'ordinary' joys (*contentos*) and spiritual delights (*gustos*). ST Iallæ, qq. 31–33. ST IIallæ, q. 180 a.7.

43 Michael M. Wadell, 'The Importance of Rapture in the Thought of Aquinas', *Nova et Vetera*, 12, English ed., No. 1 (2014) 255–285. I am fully aware that the theory of 'exitus-reditus' is by some contemporary scholars rejected. However, M. Wadell accepts it and incorporates to his own train of reasoning. Therefore, I mention it also.

44 Cf. Murray, *Aquinas in Prayer*, pp. 57–59 (and relevant footnotes).

45 'Divina scientia non est discursiva vel ratiocinativa, sed absoluta et simplex. Cui similis est scientia quae ponitur donum spiritus sancti, cum sit quaedam participativa similitudo ipsius.' ST IIallæ, q. 9 a.1 ad 1.

6.2.1. INTERMEDIARY CLARIFICATION

In this short part I would like summarise the previous discussion, show the important points of Teresa's teaching related to the topic of the mystical knowledge and ask two important questions.

Teresa describes two kinds of knowledge man may gain: the natural and the supernatural (mystical one). The mystical knowledge may transmit the knowledge either of the spiritual realm or of the world. The knowledge of the spiritual realm may be either of God (and that which is related to him, e.g. angels) or of the devil (and that which is related to him). Likewise, the mystical knowledge may be given either by God or by the evil one. In the rest of this work I deliberately put aside all the options but one: I further consider only the situation when mystical knowledge has its source in God and is of Him. All the other possibilities would be of concern to spiritual directors or for the purpose of understanding the spiritual gifts (for example, *cardiognosis*) but they are of no avail to our present inquiry.

This is related to a second point that must be stressed. Even within the mystical stage it is possible to distinguish two fundamentally different states: everything which precedes the final union and the final union of mystical marriage itself. This difference is reflected also in the 'quality' of mystical knowledge. What I mean is this: before the final union of mystical marriage, mystical knowledge is given in relatively short time glimpses, while after reaching the seventh dwelling place, Teresa speaks of the permanent encounter with God, of permanently having the intellectual vision of the Most Holy Trinity. Simply put, mystical knowledge *before* the final union is temporary, while *after* the final union, it is permanent.

Now, this leads us to two questions which should be asked. First, why it is quite common among the mystics to receive mystical knowledge, while it is quite uncommon among those living a natural life, even if not altogether excluded (since one may receive an actual grace, for example, for the sake of conversion). The answer to this question will be sought after in the next section. The second question is the relation between mystical knowledge and the beatific vision. This question will be discussed in the next chapter about the mystical marriage.

6.3. FREEDOM

The crucial question of this part is: why mystical knowledge is quite common among mystics, while it is quite uncommon among non-mystics. This question touches upon several points mentioned, described and explained in the previous chapters. More specifically, I am going to prolong the relatively short part on choice and the freedom of choice and intention. There the cruciality of those two choices made at the beginning of the natural and supernatural spiritual life have been marked. Further, I have shown that perseverance in the chosen path can be understood as an expression of one's intention towards the final end. Moreover, in the previous chapter emphasis was put on the will as the power of the soul which is for Teresa in the mystical stage more important than the intellect.

Previously, I have argued that Teresa in fact hints that the will and the intellect are in the mystical stage inseparable just as loving and knowing are inseparable. The difference is that *before* reaching the mystical marriage the will plays a more prominent role than the intellect. However, I believe that in Teresa's text the will loses its prominence *after* reaching the mystical marriage. I believe so because Teresa describes not only the union between the soul and God but hand in hand with this kind of union she also describes the union of the powers of the soul within the soul itself. As I understand it, this means that the powers of the soul are directed to their proper ends, the soul makes the right use of them and they are subdued under the realm of the intellect.

Further, Teresa describes the permanent intellectual vision being accompanied by such a strong happiness that this happiness 'overflows' through all the powers of the soul down even to the body. But vision is the matter of the intellect, whereas happiness is the matter of the will. Therefore, I come to the conclusion that Teresa, by her descriptions of the seventh dwelling place, means that

reaching the final mystical marriage leads again to a balance between the intellect and the will. In other words, both powers seem to have an equal share in the final state of the soul described as the mystical marriage. To put it otherwise, the will is 'stronger' than the intellect before reaching the mystical marriage but not afterwards. This point has a special significance for the discussion of mystical knowledge.

Up to this moment, we have observed that the spiritual life is, according to St Teresa, divided into the natural and the supernatural stages. Each of them is 'opened' by a crucial decision and the spiritual life is promoted by an intentional, prolonged faithfulness to this decision. Further, I have shown that the orderly state of the third dwelling places may be conceived as a natural end of man's spiritual life. This end is reflected also in 'knowledge'. That is to say that man's natural knowledge of God has its limits.

The supernatural stage of the spiritual life reaches its peak in the mystical marriage and supernatural knowledge. It was argued in the previous chapter that the mystical union is most likely to be participation in the future beatific vision. In this chapter, I have asked how to understand the 'impulses' from God and suggested that these are mediators of the mystical knowledge itself. They are given, according to Teresa, in the stage immediately preceding the final union. The supernatural stage, however, is characterised by a gradual abandonment of one's own will, as has been shown in the chapter about prayer. That is to say that the 'impulses' are not given before man has made the decision to abandon his own will and accept the will of God in a radical way. Why not before?

I suggest that the reason is respect for man's freedom and the explanation is twofold. First, when God is giving the soul 'impulses' and mediating supernatural knowledge, he is actively operating within man's own soul. If he did such a thing without man's own consent or rather, decision to 'give God everything', God would have transgressed man's own freedom, depriving man of the *dominium* over his own soul and life. Second, in giving man mystical knowledge, God shows man the beauty and goodness that surpasses man's own ability to gain such knowledge by his own natural reasoning, because man's own natural, rational reasoning is always at least to a certain extent built upon his sensual apprehension and abstraction. It is mediated by *species* but those always have roots in the sensually perceptible part of reality for even abstract ideas or notions (e.g., kindness, freedom or number) are comprehensible only due to sensual experience. Therefore, even man's natural understanding of God based on rational abstraction can only be mediated by *species* gained by the processes in the last instance bound to sensual apprehension. Therefore, even these species are somewhat limited. However, Teresa describes the knowledge of God mediated by the 'impulses/species' not bound to sensual apprehension in any way. This leads me to a conclusion that the mystical knowledge of God is higher and surpasses the 'mere' natural knowledge of God, because it is mediated by *species* lacking the fundament of the materially bound knowledge and so also lacking the limits of such knowledge (and *species*). Therefore, mystical experience is able to communicate the mystical knowledge of God in such a way as natural knowledge never can. If man is based on abstraction and logical thought comes to the conclusion that in God all his attributes must be one, that is not the same as to grasp this oneness of the God's attributes in its essence. Whereas Teresa's description of experience of the seventh dwelling place points in the direction that mystical, supernatural knowledge of God enables man to grasp the essential unity of God's own being. This can be so only as long as such knowledge is not mediated by the *species* having their roots in the created reality and sensual apprehension.

But by giving man such a kind of knowledge, God in fact makes man to know Him to be the last end and only good in such a manner, which gradually leaves no room for doubt or for miscomprehension. However, this has an effect on man's will too, since the will wills necessarily only that which man conceives as the supreme and most perfect good lacking nothing, namely God. So, God by giving in gradual steps ever more perfect knowledge of himself effectively 'makes' man want him and him alone.

This should be understood in the broader scope of Aquinas's notion of the will and its acts. Nothing apart from God is good in every respect and at all times. Therefore, will wills necessarily only God. As simple as it sounds, anyone could oppose that in such a case; every human person would necessarily will God as the supreme good but this is contrary to our everyday experience. However, Aquinas brings another condition into account and reminds us, that man has to know God as the supreme good in the first place, to will him necessarily. Aquinas ascribes such an absolute knowledge only to the beatific vision of the life to come. In this present state of life, man cannot, according to him, know God absolutely as the supreme good and, therefore, man cannot will God necessarily. However, he admits the possibility of supernatural knowledge gained through the rapture and considers it to be an imperfect participation in the perfect happiness reached in the afterlife.

Teresa, on the other hand, gives us a much more detailed description of the mystical life and provides a subtler account both of the possible ways of receiving supernatural knowledge and of the splendour and majestic beauty this knowledge transmits. But, if we follow Aquinas's own train of thought, we may formulate Teresa's experience in a slightly different way. During the mystical stage of the spiritual life, man receives knowledge both of God's goodness and beauty in an eminent way. That is to say, that the mystical experiences communicate the perfection of God's goodness and beauty. But such a communication has two effects. On the one hand, it shows God as the supreme Good in an experiential way, giving man a chance to see God as the very final end of his life. But by doing so, it incites the will to will this only and supreme good, the perfect good. To put it differently, when God gives man the supernatural knowledge of himself, he gives man the knowledge of his own perfection. But this means man recognises God to be his only and final end, the promise of happiness without end. However, such a knowledge incites man's own will to will only God.

Now, if God gave man such a kind of knowledge *before* man himself decided to give God everything, namely his own will, then God would *determine* man to will him and him alone and that would mean depriving man of his own freedom. If man saw God as the supreme and perfect good *before* he made a decision to will only Him, he would not have had any other choice but to will God, the supreme good which lacks nothing, for such is the nature of the will, as Aquinas reminds us: to will that, which is perfectly good, of necessity.

Teresa's account of the spiritual journey, however, points in the other direction. Man receives the highest forms of supernatural knowledge somewhat regularly and habitually only *after* he has made the decision to give God everything. In respect of the present discussion, it is to say that after man has reached the highest possible peak of natural knowledge, he has to decide to 'give God everything' and namely his own will, for to enter the mystical stage means to give God a free hand with one's own soul, to give consent to be acted upon in such a way which 'determines' man to God. Or the abandonment of one's own will can be simply understood as letting God 'determine' it towards the final end: himself.

I deliberately put 'determine' into inverted commas, since I aim to show that the necessity to follow God as the supreme good rooted in mystical knowledge is not determination at all, although it may be mistakenly understood in this way. I argue that it is not a determination for two reasons: first, it is rooted in man's deliberate and free decision to 'give God one's will'. Second, the knowledge of God as the supreme good increases the more that man's will is united to God's will and the more man's (supernatural) knowledge increases. But we have seen in the chapter about prayer that this process is a gradual one and even if the union of the sixth dwelling places is a close one, it is not the final one. It lacks the permanence and clarity of the final union of the mystical marriage, as is clear not only from Teresa's description of the sixth and seventh dwelling places but also from the difference between the account of the 'highest union' found in the *Life* and the *Interior Castle*. The latter book provides us with much clearer descriptions. So, even the necessitation of the

will is a gradual process and unless it is crowned by reaching the seventh dwelling place, it is not absolute for neither is the knowledge of God absolute. It is not absolute, for unlike in the seventh dwelling place, it is not permanent, to say the least. But even the permanence of the final union of mystical marriage is not beyond doubt. This point is further treated in the next chapter. At this point, let us assume that neither the union of mystical marriage nor supernatural knowledge are so clear and permanent that they would determine the will beyond the possibility of changing the decision for God.

Before showing this in the last chapter, I would like to delve a little deeper into our understanding of mystical knowledge. There is the question of why does the 'offer' to abandon everything of one's own and step into the unknown of the mystical stage come at the third dwelling places, at the 'end' of the natural stage but why not earlier? As I see it, the answer is again 'for the sake of freedom'. I shall explain the point in a retrospective manner. There is the first decision to turn one's gaze from 'the world' and begin the spiritual life. However, at the first stages described as the first two dwelling places, man is still bound by his sensuality, passions, disordered desires, bad memories and wild phantasies, as Teresa showed us in the first part. This means that man's intellect is still rather subdued to the lesser powers of the soul. However, the proper order, as Aquinas explains, is the other way round: the lesser powers of the soul should be subdued to the intellect. If the order is in the first stage of the spiritual life still reversed, then man has not *dominium* over his own soul and that means he also does not have proper use of his reason, and *ipso facto* not the proper understanding. Since the will is so closely connected to the intellect, it follows that as long as the intellect does not exercise its proper function, man has no proper understanding and no proper willing. The will lacks 'rectitude' as Aquinas would say. But that also means man is not capable of making a decision that would be truly free.

Now, this needs an explanation. By the previous statement I do not mean that the decisions made while man is subdued to his own sensuality are not free. They are in the sense that man can make a decision or series of decisions that would lead him out of the bondage of his own sensuality. Teresa shows that quite clearly and Aquinas would not disagree. However, the problem we are treating at this part is the problem of mystical knowledge and the question of why it is not offered sooner than once man has reached the well-ordered life. Above, I have argued that the transition into the mystical stage means that God shows himself to man in such a manner that man is incapable of wanting anything else. Previously, I have connected the disorderly first two dwelling places to the improper use of man's intellect and therefore to improper knowledge. This improper knowledge relates both to man himself but also to God. If man was offered the second choice of the mystical life before he reached the ordered life of the third dwelling places, than he would either be unable to understand the choice itself, for he would not have yet acquired the natural knowledge of God as his final good, or he would be forced to will God as the supreme good without his understanding. Moreover, without his proper understanding, he would not have known what he abandoned, for the natural self-understanding would have still been improper.

We could demonstrate this point with an example. Let us say that a man was offered to abandon his own will to the Lord before he acquired a natural orderly understanding of himself. Later, he would receive much deeper knowledge and would realise that should he have known earlier he would not have made the decision in the first place. However, his will would tend towards the final good nonetheless, but such a man could complain that he was not given a free choice.

Now, there is a second point regarding this. I have mentioned several times at various parts that Teresa accepts the possibility of a short time and individual mystical experiences given out of the mercy of God for a specific purpose in the manner of an actual grace. I have also shown that Teresa sees some fundamental difference between these individual mystical experiences given before man has reached the mystical stage and those given within the mystical stage. For the purpose of grasping mystical knowledge clearly, the former were put aside for a while. However, at this point,

I would like to bring them back to the light. For it seems that Teresa hints that just as there exists progression in the spiritual life leading from the spiritual life practically not existing, to reaching the natural final end, stepping into the mystical stage and the gradual abandonment of one's own will, so there also seems to be a gradual progression in the matter of 'necessitation' of the will.

This 'necessitation' of the will, as Aquinas showed us, pertains solely to the final end under the mode of perfect good, i.e., God, under the condition that the intellect has a proper and absolute understanding thereof. Teresa accepts the possibility of the mystical experiences even within the spiritual stage to which these experiences are not due at all. However, even if these experiences may function as a 'motivation' to come closer to God (or to convert, or to start to pray, etc.), they lack the urgency and necessitation of the later stages, because man in the former stages lacks the necessary proper understanding enabled by the habitual encounter with God through the mediacy of the prayer and the sacraments.

The second step is reached in the third dwelling places, where the orderly Christian life is established. This natural end is also connected to the proper order of an individual soul's powers and the proper, although 'only' natural knowledge of God and his ways. If man steps further into the mystical stage, we observe the graduality of the mystical union. As the individual stages of the union are connected also to the ever intensified mystical knowledge, I think it possible to interpret Teresa's texts in such a manner that man is being given ever growing knowledge of God, the supreme and perfect good, which corresponds to the nature of the will. Therefore, with the increase of the intensity of the mystical union, man loses the possibility to turn himself away from God. The graduality of the necessitation of the will may be understood as a way of 'accommodating' oneself to the new way of being. At the same time, however, it provides man with plentiful opportunities to change his mind and turn away from God. This is especially so if we take into account Teresa's description of less convenient mystical experiences which John of the Cross would call the 'night of the spirit', or prolonged terms of aridities or Teresa's account of the experience during which man has 'a feeling' that he has been abandoned by God altogether. At least until the sixth dwelling places, the graduality of 'necessitation' should not be understood in terms of time, meaning leading to ever longer periods of 'mystical knowledge'. Mystical knowledge before the seventh dwelling places has rather the character of brief, unexpected and overwhelming glimpses into the 'other reality' than anything else.

Man is, therefore, not 'determined', for he had to firstly make at least two crucial decisions; second, he had to 'confirm' them along the way multiple times (by perseverance in prayer even during 'spiritual aridities') and unless his knowledge of God as the supreme good is perfect, man always retains the possibility to turn himself away from God.

The original question of this part was why it is that the mystic gains spiritual knowledge quite often while non-mystics only occasionally. My answer is that the mystic has already freely decided to present his own freedom to God giving God the freedom to act in the very core of his own being, that is in his very soul. By doing so, the mystic has given God the opportunity to act in his very soul in such a way as leads to the experiential and profound understanding of God being the fullness of good and God being the very final end of man's own life. Such profound knowledge of God's essence, however, leads to the natural necessitation of man's will, that is, of man being unable not to will God anymore. Hand in hand with this gift, there goes, however, also the full understanding of oneself and the fulfilment of one's nature or at least of the nature of one's will, and perhaps also the nature of the intellect.

6.4. WILL, INTELLECT AND MEMORY IN THE UNITIVE STAGE

The final question connected to mystical knowledge I would like to present regards why Teresa puts emphasis on the will instead of on the intellect. This is connected to the character of the mystical knowledge gained, namely its being given for only a short period of time and relatively

sporadically. By sporadically I mean in contrast to the final mystical union of the mystical marriage, for in comparison to those individual mystical experiences communicating the mystical knowledge during the natural stage of the spiritual life, the experiences carrying the mystical knowledge during the mystical stage are relatively regular and often. Further, I would like to show that the intellective memory plays an important role and its role helps to understand the prominence of the will in the mystical stage preceding the final union. Also, it seems to me to be an apt point to close the discussion about mystical knowledge and open the discussion about the mystical marriage.

First, however, I need to stress that this section deals only with the stage of mystical life preceding the final union of the seventh dwelling place, that is, with the *via illuminativa* and *via unitiva*. The reason is that, as I see it, the final union of the mystical marriage changes the situation significantly. This will be shown in the next chapter, since it rather complex.

With this information in mind we can proceed further. I have shown that the spiritual life in the mystical stage before reaching the mystical marriage is carried primarily by the will. Teresa stresses the importance of the will, showing its fundamental and intrinsic relation to love. However, she does not lose the intellect and the knowledge from her perspective showing the intertwined relation between the intellect and the will. I have further suggested that Teresa's text is much easier to understand if we hold in mind the mental picture of Aquinas's notion of the will-intellect relation. It is this last point which I would like to build upon.

According to Aquinas, the will can follow only the good known by the intellect. The more perfectly and accurately the intellect comprehends its object as something good, that is, suitable for man's nature in general and the will's nature in particular, the more the will is inclined towards this good. Further, I have argued that Aquinas in his texts gradually shows that nothing but God can be understood as the final and perfect good enabling the human will to rest in peace. Further, in the previous sections of this chapter, I have argued that together with the step into the mystical stage of the spiritual life there comes a profound change of our own understanding, or knowledge, which is in the last stance the knowledge of God himself. This knowledge was called 'mystical', denoting that it has its source in God himself, not in the material reality nor in the understanding based on the abstraction, which ultimately has again its roots in the materially bound apprehension. I have suggested that this mystical knowledge could be mediated by the *species intellectivas* given to the intellect by God in a similar way as God gives knowledge to the separated soul. I have also shown that there exists a gradual progression both in the intensity and profoundness of mystical knowledge.

Now, in this sense, mystical knowledge represents a profound change in man's way of gaining knowledge. The graduality of the process can be understood as a process of 'becoming accustomed' to the new way. It does not seem to be an easy process, as Teresa describes many rather unpleasant encounters along the way, including profound doubts, anxieties and periods of spiritual aridities (often long). These experiences often mean, in practical terms, that man actually does not understand or does not actually grasp God as the ultimate good. Sometimes, he may even be deprived of any security of understanding. So, it seems that the intellect cannot act as the main mover of the spiritual life in the mystical stage for there are times during which mystical knowledge is lacking and natural knowledge does not suffice to incite the will towards God as the very final end of man. So, if the intellect is at times as if blinded, what other power is there that could supplement its role, even if only temporarily? Since the intellect is so closely connected to the will, then perhaps the will could be the leading power of the soul during the mystical stage before reaching the final union, always moving man towards the final end. However, the will could do so only if man already had an understanding of God to be such an end. This is where mystical knowledge comes to the fore once again, according to my opinion.

To explain my point I would like to consider the following: the natural reasoning is capable of inciting the will only within the boundaries of the natural life. But natural knowledge cannot present

God as the final and supreme good to the will in such a manner that would communicate also the bliss and/or the repose reached by the will in reaching the final end of the beatific vision. In other words, man can indeed reach a natural knowledge of God as his final end based on some kind of abstraction, but such an abstraction is not able to communicate both the bliss and the peace. Without such an experience, there always remains doubt whether the conclusion based on the abstraction is right and/or complete and whether man has not made some mistake or error during the process. Therefore, mere natural knowledge is not able to incite man's will in such a way that man would not want anything but God. Or, to put it otherwise, it is not able to incite the will to will God as the only and final end.

However, if man takes the risky step into the unknown of the mystical stage, the experience inciting his will is given and it is twofold. First, there is the experience of the *gustos*, the spiritual delights, and the prayer of quiet (giving the soul the taste of peace). Second, there are the other mystical experiences mediating mystical knowledge. Both are supernatural in the sense of having their root in God. But that means that their quality and intensity is supernatural too, surpassing the quality and intensity of a natural human experience rooted in and proceeding from man's apprehension of and contact with the natural, material world. Since the former is not rooted in the material and created but in the immaterial and uncreated, then the experience thereof is able to incite the will in such a manner that the man wills nothing but God.

Now, the *gustos* seem to pertain to the will, whereas mystical knowledge does so to the intellect. Both lead to the will willing the end. However, the will would not will God alone without the proper knowledge. Natural knowledge, as was shown, is not capable of leading man beyond a certain border. That is, the natural knowledge of God is not profound enough to incite the will to will God alone. Therefore, mystical knowledge, more convenient for mediating the essence of God, is given for the sake of the will.

However, this mystical knowledge is not permanent, unless man has reached the final mystical marriage. How is it possible that the will follows God and God alone as the final and only end of man even if the intellect *actually* does not know God to be such an end, since it finds itself in the period of the 'dark night'? There, I think, is where the intellective memory plays its important role. When Teresa discuss the question of the true and false mystical experiences, she presents the true ones as those which are deeply imprinted in the memory and remembered for many years, sometimes even for a lifetime. So, even if the intellect does not actually know God to be the final and only end of man, the mystical knowledge previously gained has shown man this to be true in such an eminent way that it incited the will to will only God. If such an experience was a true one then it remained imprinted in man's memory, and the memory in turn supplements the temporal lack of sufficient (i.e., supernatural) knowledge.

With the memory of God's splendour deeply rooted in man's memory, the memories thereof can revive the experience of God's delightful goodness and thus 'keep the will on track' to its final end. The will desiring perfect good is in this way able to move the intellect to 'the knowledge', to 'know' this good once again. This influence of the will on the intellect was mentioned in the opening section of the previous chapter and K. O'Reilley shows it in detail. Of course, the intellect itself is unable to reach mystical knowledge but the will can move the intellect to 'desire' it nonetheless.

I see the reason why the principal mover of the spiritual life in the mystical 'pre-marriage' stage is the will, in the character of the mystical knowledge itself. If the mystical knowledge is a kind of knowledge not bound to materiality and sensual apprehension in any way, then before reaching the fulness of permanent mystical knowledge, the intellect is not able to permanently know God through the infused *species* but always has to recourse back to its natural way of knowing mediated through the naturally gained *species*.

This is very well shown in Teresa's own account of the mystical experiences communicating mystical knowledge, especially in the sixth dwelling places. Those experiences very often lead to

the suppression of the natural way of knowledge. Teresa speaks about the cessation of the operation of the senses. In connection to the flight of the spirit she even speaks about a state resembling death (she is not sure whether the mere breath was not stopped). However, at the same time, man is given some other kind of knowledge related to God and his kingdom. So, she describes a state in which supernatural knowledge is given at the expense of natural knowledge, which means one has to be abandoned for the sake of the other. However, this does not count for the seventh dwelling place, the final union of the mystical marriage, where the one type of knowledge does not exclude the other.

This is what leads me to the conclusion that not only does mystical knowledge have no relation to material reality but also that the purpose of the mystical stage of the spiritual life is to 'teach' man to receive his knowledge not only in the natural but also in the supernatural way.

7. Mystical Marriage

The final chapter has left us with one of the most intriguing questions: what is the mystical marriage and what is its relation to the beatific vision? Is it a participation in the future glory? Is its essence the same as that of the beatific vision? Is it imperfect participation therein or is it the beatific vision *itself* only actualised to a lesser degree? What if it already is a beatific vision realised even before death in this present state of life? Does it mean that one cannot commit a grave sin anymore? Why is it expressed using nuptial vocabulary? Is there any reference to human marriage, or to be more precise to human sacramental marriage? What happens with the individual powers of the soul? How does knowledge metamorphose?

To tackle all those questions, I propose, first of all, to have a close look at what Teresa says about the seventh dwelling place. Then, I wish to present a brief exposition of Aquinas's thought on the beatific vision and the beatitude as the final end of man. I hope that this method will supplement us with a necessary framework and hence enable us to search for the answers to the rest of the questions.

However, I would like to say explicitly that this chapter is speculation based primarily on a very detailed analysis of Teresa's text in an attempt to follow its reason and keeping in mind the necessity of the coherence of such an interpretation.

7.1. TERESA ON MYSTICAL MARRIAGE

First of all, let us take a close look at what St Teresa says about the mystical marriage. This account must remain restricted to the *Interior Castle*, since this is the only work in which she describes it. The most important are the first two chapters of the seventh dwelling place since there she struggles to define the spiritual marriage, whereas in the latter two chapters she deals with the more specific effects, both inward and outward.

Interestingly, at the beginning of the chapter she re-evokes the very beginning of the whole work and once again repeats that man generally does not understand what secrets are hidden in his own soul, and he does not understand that he was created in the image of God. She even repeats her plea to be helped to depict the topic about which she is going to write.¹

The latter part of the chapter one of the seventh dwelling places presents the characteristics of this state, which is of immense interest for this chapter. Although it is a little lengthy, I find it worth citing in full:

In this seventh dwelling place the union comes about in a different way: our good God now desires to remove the scales from the soul's eyes and let it see and understand, although in a strange way, something of the favor He grants it. When the soul is brought into that dwelling place, the Most Blessed Trinity, all three Persons, through an intellectual vision, is revealed to it through a certain representation of the truth. First there comes an enkindling in the spirit in the manner of a cloud of magnificent splendor; and these Persons are distinct, and through an admirable knowledge the soul understands as a most profound truth that all three Persons are one substance and one power and one knowledge and one God alone. *It knows in such a way that what we hold by faith, it understands, we can say, through sight* although the sight is not with the bodily eyes nor with the eyes of the soul, because we are not dealing with an imaginative vision. Here all three Persons communicate themselves to it, speak to it, and explain

¹ M 7,1,1.

those words of the Lord in the Gospel: that He and the Father and the Holy Spirit will come to dwell with the soul that loves Him and keeps His commandments. [...] Each day this soul becomes more amazed, for these Persons never seem to leave it any more, but it clearly beholds, in the way that was mentioned, that they are within it. In the extreme interior, in some place very deep within itself, the nature of which it doesn't know how to explain, because of a lack of learning, it perceives this divine company.²

In this description, several expressions are of special concern for our topic. Some of the things mentioned here are explained further in the text in more detail by St Teresa herself. First, the mystical marriage is not identical with any previous mystical experience, for the manner in which it happens is different. Second, the mystical marriage communicates a special kind of knowledge. It certainly belongs to the rank of mystical knowledge, yet she pays special heed to show that the knowledge communicated through the mystical marriage is yet of a different kind than the mystical knowledge communicated through the mediacy of the mystical experiences in the previous stages. Third, she describes this knowledge as a form of sight. Fourth, it is a sight into the very essence of the Triune God, since she describes the distinctness and oneness of the persons of the Most Holy Trinity. Fifth, not only does she not ascribe this 'sight' to the bodily eyes, but she does not ascribe it even to the 'eyes of the soul'. The 'eyes of the soul' were mentioned in the previous dwelling places. So, in this higher state the way in which the knowledge is gained is also higher, not using the previous 'organs' or way of receiving the knowledge. She even describes it as a direct insight into the intra-trinitarian relations (which means into the very essence) of God. Sixth, we should realise that by stating 'through an admirable knowledge the soul understands as a most profound truth that all three Persons are one substance and one power and one knowledge and one God alone', she is describing an understanding of a simplicity of God due to which all the divine attributes are understood as one only, which we normally know only in an analogous way. Seventh, this 'vision' is a permanent state. Eighth, 'this vision' is not permanent. Ninth, it is a kind of an intellectual vision. Tenth, she mentions it as 'enkindling the spirit'.

Obviously contradictory points seven and eight are not a typo, omission or fault of mine but actually present a constituent part of the whole question 'what the mystical marriage is'. Therefore, a whole section of this chapter is dedicated to the question of whether the mystical marriage is or is not a permanent state.

The last, tenth, point is remarkable, for further in the text Teresa introduces a distinction between the 'soul' and the 'spirit'. Her aim is to show that there are individual 'parts' of the soul that are to a certain degree independent of each other and yet remain substantially one and the same. The distinction between the 'soul' and the 'spirit' as a higher 'part' of the soul enables her in the latter chapters to explain how it is possible that the mystical marriage is a permanent state even though man remains immersed in the daily activities, which she demonstrates upon the image of the reconciliation between 'Martha and Mary'. The 'spirit' is according to her the 'higher part of the soul' which remains in the seventh dwelling place contemplating the grandeurs of the Lord, while the 'soul' can be focused on mundane, very natural activities. I will return to this point later since I wish to remain focused on Teresa's explanation of the spiritual marriage.

2 'Aquí es de otra manera: quiere ya nuestro buen Dios quitarla las escamas de los ojos y que vea y entienda algo de la merced que le hace, aunque es por una manera extraña; y metida en aquella morada, por visión intelectual, por cierta manera de representación de la verdad, se le muestra la Santísima Trinidad, todas tres personas, con una inflamación que primero viene a su espíritu a manera de una nube de grandísima claridad, y estas Personas distintas, y por una noticia admirable que se da al alma, entiende con grandísima verdad ser todas tres Personas una sustancia y un poder y un saber y un solo Dios; de manera que lo que tenemos por fe, allí lo entiende el alma, podemos decir, por vista, aunque no es vista con los ojos del cuerpo, porque no es visión imaginaria. Aquí se le comunican todas tres Personas, y la hablan, y la dan a entender aquellas palabras que dice el Evangelio que dijo el Señor: que vendría El y el Padre y el Espíritu Santo a morar con el alma que le ama y guarda sus mandamientos. [...] Y cada día se espanta más esta alma, porque nunca más le parece se fueron de con ella, sino que notoriamente ve, de la manera que queda dicho, que están en lo interior de su alma, en lo muy muy interior, en una cosa muy honda, que no sabe decir cómo es, porque no tiene letras, siente en sí esta divina compañía.' M 7,1,6-7 [emphasis mine].

Concerning ‘intellectual vision’, Teresa tries to explain that this kind of vision is definitely not an imaginative vision and even though she describes it as an intellectual one, she also stresses that it is different from the intellectual visions experienced in the sixth dwelling places.

There is another point to be raised. Even at the end of the *previous* dwelling places, she likens the entrance into the seventh dwelling place to entering heaven and assimilates the previous steps of the spiritual progress to purgatory.³ There is another remark where she likens the mystical marriage or rather the seventh dwelling place to heaven, since God dwells within it. Teresa refers to the seventh dwelling place of the mystical marriage as to the part of the soul where there is God alone and where *he* brings the *soul* there because the soul is not able to enter there by its own efforts.⁴

This is a short summary of the basic features of the mystical marriage as Teresa represents it. Before delving into the deeper waters of meaning, since her description of the overwhelming experience of the mystical marriage resembles the beatific vision so much, it is now a convenient moment to briefly introduce Aquinas’s teaching on the beatific vision. However, it turns out that Aquinas in writing about the beatific vision never loses this present state of life completely from sight. He often refers to this life as the state of a wayfarer heading towards the fatherland (or homeland) of the beatific vision. Several elements concerned with this life often come to the fore. Interestingly, these elements can also be found in Teresa’s own teaching on the spiritual life. Since I have shown that the whole mystical life according to Teresa spins around the intellect and will, or knowledge and love, it would be interesting to see what Thomas has to say about it in connection to the beatific vision. It turns out that he discerns two elements in the pre-mortem spiritual life key for gaining the beatific vision: faith and charity. Both of these virtues represent yet another mode of knowledge of God. Therefore, after depicting Aquinas’s teaching on the beatific vision, I dedicate the next section to the summary of possible modes of knowledge as found in Teresa, inserting knowledge through faith and charity as described by Aquinas finally to consider whether the knowledge of God gained in the mystical marriage is identical with any of them or is different. This approach, as I believe, will put the whole question about the nature of the mystical marriage into appropriate perspective, enabling us to grasp the other characteristics of the final union with God, as Teresa describes them.

7.2. AQUINAS ON MYSTICAL MARRIAGE

There are multiple places dispersed throughout Aquinas’s works that treat the question of the beatific vision. Except a few remarks in various commentaries,⁵ there are several questions from *Summa Theologiae* where this topic is treated. The question about the rapture has already been noted, but further, this topic is found in the questions about faith (and K. O’Reilly has shown us in the previous chapter that faith as a ‘medium’ of mystical knowledge is indispensable) and in the chapter about the resurrection. But first and foremost, the beatific vision is treated in the twelfth question of the *Prima Pars*, which is called ‘How God is known by us’.⁶ Further, the topic of the beatific vision is found in the *Summa contra Gentiles*,⁷ *De Veritate*⁸ and in the second chapter of the *Commentary on Sentences*, book four, distinction 49.⁹ Surprisingly, Thomas’s thought on the

3 ‘Bien es que lo mucho cueste mucho. Cuánto más que, si es purificar esta alma para que entre en la séptima morada, como los que han de entrar en el cielo se limpian en el purgatorio, es tan poco este padecer, como sería una gota de agua en la mar.’ M 7,11,6.

4 ‘Pues cuando Su Majestad es servido de hacerle la merced dicha de este divino matrimonio, primero la mete en su morada, y quiere Su Majestad que no sea como otras veces que la ha metido en estos arrobamientos, que yo bien creo que la une consigo entonces y en la oración que queda dicha de unión, aunque no le parece al alma que es tan llamada para entrar en su centro, como aquí en esta morada, sino a la parte superior.’ M 7,1,5.

5 *Compendium theologiae*, lib. 1 cap. 216. Super Io., cap. 11. 15. Super Io., cap. 171. 6. Super Heb., cap. 11. 6.. Super Rom., cap. 81. 5.

6 ST I, q. 12. ST IIaIIæ, q. 2 a. 3. ST IIaIIæ, q. 5 a. 1. ST IIaIIæ, q. 175 a. 3. ST IIaIIæ, q. 175 a. 6 ad 3. ST III, q. 55 a. 2 ad 1.

7 SCG lib. 3 cap. 54. SCG lib. 3 cap. 154 n. 2. SCG lib. 4 cap. 54 n. 3.

8 QDV q. 8, a. 1. QDV q. 8, a. 4. QDV q. 13, a. 5, ad 5. QDV q. 18, a. 1. QDV q. 20, a. 2.

9 In Sent II, d. 4 q. 1 a. 1. In Sent II, d. 4 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3. In Sent II, d. 23 q. 2 a. 1. In Sent II, d. 31 q. 2 a. 1 ad 5. In Sent IV, d. 9 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 1 ad 3. In Sent IV, d. 10 q. 1 a. 4 qc. 4. In Sent IV, d. 10 q. 1 a. 4 qc. 4 ad 1. These texts treat the ‘beatific vision’

beatific vision remains consistent throughout the scope of his works.

The main features of his teaching on this subject are briefly and concisely summarised in the *Summa contra Gentiles* and worked out in greater detail in the *Commentary on the Sentences and Summa Theologiae*. The divine substance is not absolutely beyond the reach of the created intellect, since as the first intelligible thing it is also the principle of all the intellectual knowledge. Yet, it exceeds the natural powers of the created intellect, therefore, ‘the created intellect needs to be strengthened by some divine light in order to be able to see the divine substance’.¹⁰ In this short paragraph, there are two points deserving a closer look.

First, to further support his claim that the understanding of the divine substance is not beyond the capabilities of the created intellect, he revokes the final end of man as consisting in happiness or beatitude. However, this in turn consists in the understanding of the substances separate from matter according to their being.¹¹ To hold that man is absolutely unable to understand God, continues Aquinas, is an untenable position, ‘because of the fact that since understanding is man’s most proper activity, we must assign his beatitude on the basis of this activity, i.e., when this activity is perfected in him.’¹² To hold that something other than the understanding of God is man’s final end would indicate that man can find the happiness outside God and also that something other than God perfects man. For Aquinas, such a position is absurd. In *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas adds to these two arguments a third one which he builds upon man’s natural desire to know the cause of any effect and hence also the first cause of everything. Since the First Cause is God, man would not be able to fulfil the natural desire should he not be able to know God. Therefore, there is some point in which man is able to see the essence of God.¹³

Second, Aquinas mentions the light uniting the created intellect to God. This light does not unite the created and uncreated intellect in being but only in understanding, it is a likeness of God perfecting the created intellect in order that it is able to see the divine substance. The light is given by God, far surpassing the natural powers of the human intellect and so it is supernatural.¹⁴ However, there is a proportion between the created intellect and God and it is a proportion of aptitude of an intelligent being for an intelligible object.¹⁵

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- briefly, in connection to some other topic, for example, the knowledge of the angels. But the most elaborate text is the In Sent IV, d. 49 q. 2: *De visione Dei*.
- 10 ‘Divina enim substantia non sic est extra facultatem creati intellectus quasi aliquid omnino extraneum ab ipso, [...], nam divina substantia est primum intelligibile, et totius intellectualis cognitionis principium: sed est extra facultatem intellectus creati sicut excedens virtutem eius [...]. Indiget igitur confortari intellectus creatus aliquo divino lumine ad hoc quod divinam essentiam videre possit.’ SCG 3, c. 54, 9.
 - 11 ‘Respondeo dicendum, quod sicut secundum fidem ponimus finem ultimum humanae vitae esse visionem Dei; ita philosophi posuerunt ultimam hominis felicitatem esse intelligere substantias separatas a materia secundum esse.’ In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, 22.
 - 12 ‘Secundo, quia cum intelligere sit maxime propria operatio hominis, oportet quod secundum eam assignetur sibi sua beatitudo, cum haec operatio in ipso perfecta fuerit.’ In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, 25.
 - 13 ST I, q. 12, a. 1.
 - 14 ‘Non enim hoc lumen intellectum creatum Deo coniungit secundum esse, sed secundum intelligere solum. Quia vero ipsius Dei proprium est ut suam substantiam perfecte cognoscat, lumen praedictum Dei similitudo est quantum ad hoc quod ad Dei substantiam videndam perducit. [...] Aliud igitur oportet esse in substantia intellectuali creata lumen quo divina visione beatificatur; et aliud quodcumque lumen quo in specie suae naturae completur, et proportionaliter suae substantiae intelligit. [...] Quarta vero solvitur per hoc quod visio divinae substantiae omnem naturalem virtutem excedit, ut ostensum est. Unde et lumen quo intellectus creatus perficitur ad divinae substantiae visionem, oportet esse supernaturale.’ SCG 3, c. 54, 10–12.. See also ST I, q. 12, a. 4, ad 3. P. Macdonald even speaks about the ‘*deiformity*’ – the light of glory making the human intellect ‘like’ God. Paul A. Macdonald, Jr., ‘The eschatological character of our knowledge of God’. *Modern Theology* 22, vol.2 (2006), pp. 255–276, p. 259.
 - 15 ‘Proportio autem intellectus creati est quidem ad Deum intelligendum, non secundum commensurationem aliquam proportionem existente, sed secundum quod proportio significat quamcumque habitudinem unius ad alterum, ut materiae ad formam, vel causae ad effectum. Sic autem nihil prohibet esse proportionem creaturae ad Deum secundum habitudinem intelligentis ad intellectum, sicut et secundum habitudinem effectus ad causam.’ SCG 3, c. 54, 14. M. Wadell formulates (and then disproves) a possible objection: would not an apotheosis of the created intellect be necessary for it to grasp the divine essence? He answers negatively showing that for Aquinas the limits of human capacities are not identical with the limits of the human existence, which, then, can be elevated by divine grace to participation in what is natural to God. ‘His diction does not suggest a radical break between the natural acts of the created intellect and its acts in the state of glory, but rather a continuity.’ Michael M. Wadell, ‘Aquinas on the Light of Glory’. *Tópicos* 40 (2011), 105–132, pp. 118–121.

There are four points of interest which it is worthy to compare with what he says in the *Commentary on the Sentences*. First, it is the ‘likeness to the Divine essence’, second, the perfecting role of the light of glory, third, proportionality between the created and uncreated intellect, and fourth, the aptitude of an intelligent being for an intelligible object. However, in the *Commentary*, the latter two points are inherent in the first two points and therefore will not be treated separately.

To the first point concerning the ‘likeness to the divine essence’, Aquinas first of all presents various philosophical arguments of his predecessors and finds them wanting. At last, he comes to the conclusion that to this likeness of the human intellect to the divine essence it is necessary to ascribe some other mode. He says:

[A]ny act of knowing a form by which the thing is known or seen is necessary, the form by which the intellect is perfected for seeing separated substances is not a quiddity that the intellect abstracts from composite things, as the first opinion stated. Nor is it an impression left by the separated substance on our intellect, as the second opinion stated. Rather, it is the separated substance itself, which is joined to our intellect as a form in such a way that it itself is what is understood and that by which it is understood. And whatever the case may be for other separated substances, this is the mode we must accept for the vision of God in his essence. For no matter what other form might inform our intellect, our intellect could not be led through it to the divine essence.¹⁶ [...] It should be understood that the proportion of the divine essence to our intellect is like the proportion of form to matter. [...] And thus since the intellectual power is received in the soul as well as the in-dwelling divine essence, though not in the same mode, the divine essence will be related to the intellect as form to matter. [...] And in the following way it can be shown that this suffices for our intellect to be able to see the divine essence itself through the divine essence. For just as from the natural form by which something has being and from matter, one being simply comes about, so also from the form by which the intellect understands together with the intellect itself, one single thing in the act of understanding comes about.¹⁷

[...] Hence, if there is a thing subsisting as such that does not have anything in it besides what is intelligible in it, such a thing will be able to be the form by which the intellect understands. [...] And thus, since the divine essence is pure act, it will be able to be the form by which the intellect understands. And this will be the beatific vision. And thus [...] the union of the soul to the body is a kind of analogue of the blessed union by which the spirit will be united to God.¹⁸

This rather lengthy citation represents the core argument of Aquinas for the possibility of the beatific vision. He underscores his position further in the responses to the objections. Noteworthy is one point which appears several times – according to nature, God is far above the created intellect. However, according to proportionality, it is not so, since the created intellect is proportionate to knowing any immaterial thing, hence also God. This is the kind of ‘likeness’ required for the knowledge of God.¹⁹ Also, it should be noted that according to Aquinas, the divine essence becomes its

16 ‘Cum enim in qualibet cognitione sit necessaria aliqua forma, qua res cognoscatur aut videatur; forma ista qua intellectus perficitur ad videndas substantias separatas, non est quidditas quam intellectus abstrahit a rebus compositis, ut dicebat prima opinio; neque aliqua impressio relicta a substantia separata in intellectu nostro, ut dicebat secunda; sed est ipsa substantia separata, quae conjungitur intellectui nostro ut forma, ut ipsa sit quod intelligitur, et qua intelligitur. Et quidquid sit de aliis substantiis separatis, tamen istum modum oportet nos accipere in visione Dei per essentiam: quia quacumque alia forma informaretur intellectus noster, non posset per eam duci in essentiam divinam.’ In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, 30.

17 ‘Proportio essentiae divinae ad intellectum nostrum est sicut proportio formae ad materiam. [...] et ita cum in anima recipiatur vis intellectiva, et ipsa essentia divina inhabitans, licet non per eundem modum, essentia divina se habebit ad intellectum sicut forma ad materiam. [...] Et quod hoc sufficiat ad hoc quod intellectus per essentiam divinam possit videre ipsam essentiam divinam, hoc modo potest ostendi. Sicut enim ex forma naturali qua aliquid habet esse, et materia, efficitur unum ens simpliciter; ita ex forma qua intellectus intelligit, et ipso intellectu, fit unum in intelligendo.’ In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, 32.

18 ‘Unde si sit aliqua res per se subsistens quae non habeat aliquid in se praeter id quod est intelligibile in ipsa, talis res per se poterit esse forma qua intelligitur. [...] et ideo, cum essentia divina sit actus purus, poterit esse forma qua intellectus intelligit; et hoc erit visio beatificans; [...] quod unio animae ad corpus est quoddam exemplum illius beatae unionis qua spiritus unietur Deo.’ In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, 33.

19 In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, ad 7. In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, ad 9. The topic of the proportionality of the created and uncrea-

form and perfection.²⁰ He also pays special heed to explain that the beatific vision is not mediated in any way as the previous and imperfect modes of knowledge of God are. That is to say that the beatific vision is not mediated by any kind of ‘other’ forms, or *species*.²¹ This kind of perfect knowledge is ‘mediated’ only by the light of divine glory which relates to the created intellect in a similar way as the light of the active intellect relates to the passive intellect. Therefore, Aquinas concludes: ‘Instead there will only exist there the first medium, which will elevate our intellect to the ability to be joined to the uncreated essence in the way described. But this knowledge is not said to be mediated by this medium, since it does not fall between the knower and the thing known but is, rather, what gives to the knower the power of knowing.’²²

To the second point, the perfecting role of the light of glory, he adds that there must be a way in which the divine essence is united to the created intellect²³ as its intelligible form perfecting it. ‘Hence for the intellect to be united to the divine essence in the aforementioned mode there must be in it something after the manner of a disposition preparing it for the aforementioned union. And this is the light by which the intellect is perfected for the vision of God in the divine essence.’²⁴ However, the divine essence exceeds the nature of the created intellect so much that the very disposition towards the union between the divine and created intellect must be ‘above nature’, supernatural. Such a disposition must then be given by God and is called the ‘light of glory’.²⁵

Michael Wadell provided several interesting remarks to this topic, especially with regard to St Teresa’s teaching and to the topic of the inter-involvement of the intellect and will treated before. He shows that in Aquinas there exists an intimate connection between charity as the virtue of the will and the measure or extent to which the intellect will participate in the light of glory, since the virtue of the will overflows to the intellect. This results in overcoming the separation between the will and the intellect (and thus the separation of love and knowledge is overcome). This is another way of saying that both powers are more unified within the soul. Wadell argues:

In God, for example, will and intellect are both identical with the divine essence. So, inasmuch as the rational creature participates in God more perfectly through the light of glory, it would make sense that the glorified soul would also be elevated toward a greater unity of faculties. Moreover, the basic logic of transcendental unity suggests that the more perfectly something has being, the more perfectly one it should become. Thus, it seems plausible that the rational creature, elevated to its highest level of perfection through the *lumen gloriae*—

ted intellect is treated also in ST, q. 12, a. 4.

20 In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, ad 10.

21 P. Macdonald adds: ‘It is precisely because the intellect is capable of being immaterially or intentionally informed by the essences or forms of extra-mental objects that it is also capable of being informed by the divine essence itself.’ P. Macdonald, ‘The eschatological character of our knowledge of God’, p. 258.

22 ‘In visione igitur patriae non erit tertium medium, ut scilicet Deus per species aliorum cognoscatur, sicut nunc cognoscitur, ratione cuius dicimur nunc videre in speculo; nec erit ibi secundum medium, quia ipsa essentia divina erit qua intellectus noster videbit Deum, ut ex dictis patet; sed erit ibi tantum primum medium, quod elevabit intellectum nostrum ad hoc quod possit conjungi essentiae increatae modo praedicto. Sed ab hoc medio non dicitur cognitio mediata, quia non cadit inter cognoscentem et rem cognitam, sed est illud quod dat cognoscenti vim cognoscendi.’ In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, ad 15. In ST IIaIIae, Aquinas founded his argument upon the notion of goodness and participation of Divine Goodness. He also conditions the acquisition of the perfect knowledge by the faith. ST IIaIIae, q. 2, a. 3. For an interesting text for comparison, see QDV, q. 18, a. 1, ad 1. Further, the topics of the ‘participated likeness’ of the created intellect to the Uncreated one, the necessity of immediate knowledge of the essence of God and the need of the created intellect to be strengthened by the ‘light of glory’ are also treated in ST I, q. 12, a.2.

23 K. Krause explains this union by reference to the concept of ‘conjunction’ found in Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes, which Aquinas most likely took over and elaborated in his own fashion. She shows that in this conjunction, ‘God replaces the medium of the intelligible species (necessary in ordinary cognition) and assumes the role of the form by which humans understand’, thus creating the most intimate and immediate relationship. Katja Krause, ‘Albert and Aquinas on the Ultimate End of Humans: Philosophy, Theology and Beatitude’. *Proceedings of the ACPA*, VI. 86 (2013), 213–229, pp.214, 223.

24 ‘Unde oportet ad hoc quod intellectus uniatur essentiae divinae modo praedicto, quod sit in eo aliquid per modum dispositionis, praeparans ipsum ad unionem praedictam; et hoc est lumen quo intellectus perficitur ad videndum Deum per essentiam divinam.’ In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 6.

25 Ibid. See also ST I, q. 12, a. 5 and the answers to all three objections. Note that unlike in other texts Aquinas uses explicitly the expression ‘illumination’ (lat. *illuminatio*) in this context.

indeed, participating in God's own vision of Godself—should also be healed of the fragmentation of intellect and will that we experience as natural *in via* and would thereby enjoy a more perfectly unified mode of being.²⁶

I find this explanation intriguing since it corresponds to Teresa's own notion of the spiritual life as gradually leading to an ever closer union of the distinct powers of the soul within the soul demonstrated in the previous chapters to an ever more unified mode of being.

The beatific vision does not provide exhaustive knowledge – it allows knowing God, albeit not comprehending him. Aquinas explains that the 'comprehension' requires that the knower have such a knowledge of the object known so that he would 'take hold of' (i.e. comprehend) everything that belongs to it. But, such a comprehensive knowledge of God is impossible even in the state of the beatific vision, since the divine essence and its truth exceeds the created intellect. This means that the created intellect cannot know God as much as God is knowable but only according to its own, created, limited mode²⁷ and, therefore, the created intellect cannot *comprehend* God.²⁸ Further, if the created intellect comprehended God, it would also mean that it would also be able to comprehend everything that God could do, thus having an understanding of the quantity of divine power for producing effects, which is impossible. Nevertheless, Aquinas accepts that the created intellect is able to understand 'all those things that God knows with the knowledge of vision',²⁹ indicating that the created intellect cannot know all of those things at once, as God does, but is able to know any of them.

Paul Macdonald expresses well this understanding but not comprehending God due to God's own immensity:

'God's infinitude [...] is in fact interwoven into the very fabric or layout of God's own reality that is "visually" impressed on the intellect in the beatitude. [...] God's infinitude, God's transcendence and even God's incomprehensibility, are directly and objectively manifest or "in view" for the blessed in the intellectual "vision" of God they enjoy in their supernaturalized cognitive state.'³⁰

'Seeing God' thus means having some direct, intellectual knowledge of him. St Thomas denies the possibility of 'seeing' God with the bodily eyes and stresses that even after the resurrection, man will not 'see' God with his bodily eyes, but rather will perceive him with the 'spiritual eye' of the intellect while being in body. In the *Commentary on Sentences*, Aquinas indeed uses the expression 'spiritual eyes', *oculi spirituali*.³¹ This is particularly interesting if we take into account Teresa's expression 'eyes of the soul'. Aquinas obviously considers the expression 'spiritual eyes' to mean the *intellectual insight* (into the essence of God in this case).

Further, he clearly reserves intellectual insight into the essence of God to the afterlife, stating that the intellect first has to be prepared for such a vision by the disposition of the light of the glory. But, to have such a disposition is, according to him, impossible in the 'wayfaring state of life' in which man is wholly bound by understanding dependent on the *species* abstracted from the senses. Therefore, man is unable to gain knowledge 'mediated' by the light of glory fully or, to put it otherwise, man cannot see God through his own form.³² Nevertheless, Aquinas also holds that God initiates us to participation in the future beatific vision by infusing the theological virtue

26 M. Wadell, Aquinas on the Light of Glory, p. 126.

27 'Ad tertium dicendum, quod intellectus creatus non videt divinam essentiam secundum modum ipsius essentiae, sed secundum modum proprium, qui finitus est: unde non oportet quod ejus efficacia in cognoscendo ex visione praedicta ampliatur in infinitum ad omnia cognoscendum.' In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, ad 5.

28 In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 3. ST I, q. 12, a. 7, responses to the objections including.

29 In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 5. ST I, q. 12, a. 8.

30 Paul A. Macdonald, Jr., 'The eschatological character of our knowledge of God'. *Modern Theology* 22, vol.2 (2006), pp. 255–276, p. 260.

31 In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 2. ST I, q. 12, a. 4.

32 'Unde oportet ponere secundum nos, quod intellectus noster quandoque perveniat ad videndam essentiam divinam, et secundum philosophos quod perveniat ad videndam essentiam substantiarum separatarum.' In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, 26. In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a.7. See also QDV q. 18, a.1

of faith into our minds.³³ Thus, faith, unlike any ecstatic mode of knowledge mentioned below, already causes our taking part in the future glory. Paul Macdonald adds: ‘The knowledge of God is [...] properly attributable to the blessed in heaven and only subsequently or derivatively attributable to persons of faith.’³⁴ Further, the same author concedes that faith objectively communicates the knowledge of God, just as vision does and even considers faith to be an epistemic analogue to the beatific vision.³⁵

But, Aquinas seems to recognise one exception, since he admits some kind of ‘like-beatific vision’ experience and this is in rapture.³⁶ On the one hand, he admits that man is able to gain an insight into the essence of God, yet it is not of the same quality as the post-mortem or post-resurrection beatific vision. He concludes that knowledge gained through rapture is an imperfect participation in the beatific vision.³⁷

Aquinas makes several interesting remarks in his answers to objections to the article dealing with the possibility of ‘beatific-vision-like’ experience. They are of concern to us since they converge with Teresa’s remarks concerning the mystical marriage. First, he enumerates the visions among the higher kinds of prophecy. Further, he considers intellectual vision to be higher than imaginative vision. The intellectual vision is again considered to be connected to contemplation. The interesting point is that such a contemplative vision is said to be mediated by the light of divine glory and it is this light that enables the very contemplation.³⁸ Hence, the contemplation and the beatific vision have something in common and that is the ‘mediator’, i.e., the light of divine glory. Aquinas demonstrates this upon several Old Testament personages, for example, Jacob, Job and first of all Moses. He says that Moses probably experienced the vision of God in his essence, yet this experience was only temporary, therefore, Aquinas refuses calling Moses ‘blessed’ and remarks that such an experience was given ‘miraculously’ from the divine power alone, not from the disposition of the intellect.³⁹ Nevertheless, the important thing is that Aquinas accepts as possible a spiritual experience in this life which enables man to have direct intellectual insight into the essence of God communicating (heavenly) bliss.

7.3. ‘WHAT WE HOLD BY FAITH WE UNDERSTAND BY SIGHT’

The title of this part is an excerpt from the introductory citation. Teresa among many other things stresses the difference between the previous spiritual states (experiences) and the mystical marriage. On behalf of the knowledge of God, she says: ‘It [the soul] knows in such a way that what we hold by faith, it understands, we can say, through sight.’ The object of such a direct sight is the Most Holy Trinity with the distinctness and unity of all the three persons. Even further in the text, Teresa again stresses that this kind of knowledge of God is different from all the previous kinds of knowledge.

Further, Aquinas postpones the knowledge gained through direct insight into the essence for God only into the afterlife. Nevertheless, he admits a direct insight into the essence of God in this

33 QDV 14,2.

34 P. Macdonald, *The eschatological character of our knowledge of God*, pp. 256, 260.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 257.

36 K. Krause upon the analysis of the relation between the philosophy and theology interestingly comes to the conclusion that Aquinas does not place the beatitude as such exclusively in the afterlife but in the union with God. However, in this life man can reach only the specific and limited forms of beatitude. The absolute beatitude is reserved only for the afterlife, since the mutabilities of the intellect in this life represent obstacles for true intellectual (beatific) vision. K. Krause, *Albert and Aquinas on the Ultimate End of Humans*, pp. 221–222.

37 ST IIaIae, q. 175, a. 3. See also ‘Et similiter potest miraculose fieri quod divina virtute aliquis intellectus creatus non habens nisi dispositionem viae elevetur ad videndum Deum per essentiam; nec tamen ex tali visione potest dici beatus simpliciter, sed secundum quid tantum, in quantum scilicet communicat in actu beati. [...] Et ideo dicendum est, quod nulla pura creatura in statu viae existens potest Deum per essentiam videre; sed Deus potest facere quod videat adhuc in statu viae manens.’ In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a.7. ‘Ratione quidem naturae, quia videre divinam essentiam est supra conditionem cuiuslibet naturae creatae; unde nulla creatura potest ad hoc pertingere, nisi aliquo lumine elevetur in illam beatam visionem: quod quidem lumen in aliquibus recipitur per modum passionis, quasi pertranseundo, ut in raptis.’ QDV q. 20, a.2.

38 In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a.7, ad 2. In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a.7, ad 3.

39 In Sent IV, d. 49, q. 2, a.7, ad 4. ST I, q. 12, a. 11, the answers to the objections including.

life but reserves this experience for the rapture and a rapture of the highest possible kinds. He demonstrates it upon the example of St Paul and Moses. However, Teresa speaks about the ‘rapture’ in the sixth dwelling places, that is before reaching the final union of the mystical marriage. Thus, when she stresses that the last step, the final union, mystical marriage is different from all the previous stages and also the knowledge this spiritual state brings about, she *ipso facto* says that the knowledge of the mystical marriage is different, higher, of a different quality and gained by different means than knowledge gained through rapture. She even stresses that the stage of the mystical marriage is considerably calmer than the previous ones and the rapture is very seldom here.

Further, Aquinas also discerns one mode of knowledge of God which is already a participation in the future glory and it is knowledge communicating through the faith. This kind of knowledge has yet not been mentioned, since Teresa definitely pre-supposes and stresses the importance of divine gifts and virtues, namely faith, hope and love, nevertheless she does not put them in direct link with the intellection. The commentaries on Aquinas in an attempt to grasp the difference between the pre- and post-mortem knowledge of God, however, work with this topic a lot. Therefore, I would like to treat this theme at this point too for three reasons: first, it will help us understand Aquinas; second, through him, we will gain better understanding of the role of the divine gifts and virtues in Teresa’s own teaching (and the importance of stressing love over knowledge in the mystical stage); and third, it will ultimately bring us nearer to the answer whether the mystical marriage is or is not a beatific vision in the body.

7.3.1. POSSIBLE MODES OF KNOWLEDGE

In the previous parts of the work I have shown that besides the natural knowledge and natural spiritual knowledge, Teresa speaks also about mystical knowledge which is often communicated through various mystical experiences. In the previous chapter, I have also shown that these kinds of mystical knowledge might be communicated through the *species* not gained by any kind of human abstraction but infused into the soul directly by God. In this chapter, knowledge not mediated by any species is in focus, as well as the knowledge of God received through faith (hope and charity and the gifts of the Holy Spirit). The question at hand regards, more precisely, what the direct knowledge is of the mystical marriage and how it differs from the previous kinds of mystical knowledge (and Teresa claims that it does differ) and whether it is different from the knowledge mediated by the infused faith (and hope and charity) and if so, how.

To find some satisfactory answers, I will discuss various secondary sources, usually dealing with Aquinas’s thought, for unlike the commentaries on Teresa, they do deal with such questions. However, I wish to start the discussion with Jacques Maritain. He provides a detailed analysis of our ways of knowledge, which forms a basis for his treatment of the mystical theology of St John of the Cross. His work is of interest for several reasons. First, his analysis reaches further than my own work can. Second, apart from being insightful, his text provides a direct link both to Aquinas and St John of the Cross, highly esteemed and beloved spiritual son and confessor to St Teresa of Avila. Thus, Maritain’s insights into the theology of St John can easily help us to understand St Teresa too. The latter is connected to the notion of faith and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which will also help us to incorporate some of the useful remarks of K. O’Reilly and W. Hill writing about the Indwelling of Divine Persons (topic closely connected to the problem of the mystical marriage, since what Teresa describes is nothing less than this indwelling) and A.N. Williams. The lastly named in her *Ground of Union* tries to uncover the convergencies between Gregory Palamas and Aquinas especially with respect to the teaching on deification. The topic is promising in connection to our own inquiry.

Maritain discerns various kinds of knowledge and introduces specific terms to be able to distinguish them and their sphere of legitimacy. Except the knowledge of material entities, he also

distinguishes mathematical and metaphysical knowledge, both of which are of the immaterial subjects and he further recognises mystical knowledge. He also provides a useful figure depicting the various kinds of intellection and their respective spheres of reality.⁴⁰

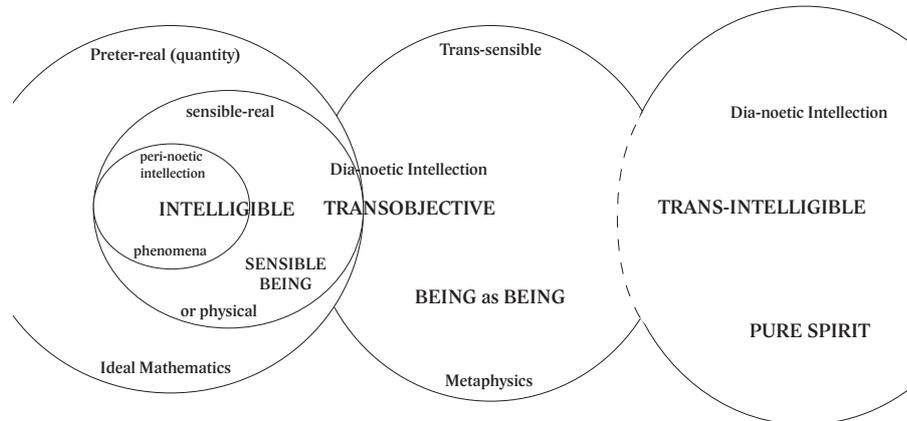


Fig. 3: The spheres of intelligibility according to Maritain

This figure depicts the three basic spheres of intelligibility that Maritain distinguishes, that of the natural phenomena, that surpassing the natural phenomena, which is the ‘sphere of the spirit’, yet reachable through the natural intellection, the sphere of metaphysics (see the ‘transobjective’) and the sphere of ‘trans-intelligible’ related to God as Pure spirit, *actus purus, ens a se*. The sphere of metaphysics and of the pure spirit are of the particular interest to this chapter.

Bernard McGinn, extensively referred to in the first, introductory chapter, provides a very useful summary of the degrees of knowledge recognised by Maritain and is worth citing in full, although the citation is a bit longer:

The lowest form of science – that is, ‘knowledge perfect in its mode’ – are the experimental sciences which form the basis for the first level of speculative or properly philosophical science, *physica*, or the philosophy of nature, which investigates the universe of the sensible real. Both the experimental sciences and the philosophy of nature exist on the first level of abstraction. The second level, abstraction from matter, is the realm of mathematics, which investigates the universe of the *praeter real*; the third level of abstraction studies the universe of the trans sensible, beings that exist without matter and the principles of metaphysics. [...] Maritain distinguishes between the *perinoetic* mode of intellection (knowledge through substitute signs) found in the empirical sciences, and dianoetic intellection, or knowledge of things in their essences found in the philosophy of nature, mathematics, and metaphysics considered as the study of being qua being. *Ananoetic* intellection, or knowing by analogy, studies the *transintelligible* realm of pure spirit. *Ananoetic* knowing in turn has three degrees: (1) the knowledge of created pure spirits, (2) the knowledge of the existence of God (both of these belong to metaphysics as natural theology), and finally (3) the *ananoetic* knowledge of faith which comes about by means of a revealed ‘superanalogy’.⁴¹

Above, I have argued that apart from the abstraction and rational discursive thought which enables us to come to knowledge about God, such as formulating the divine attributes, man may also have a natural spiritual experience about God which enables him to know God in a limited way. This second type of knowledge is less distinct and less sure than the metaphysical knowledge about God, yet it still is knowledge. Since it is also reached by man’s own effort (for example, during meditation), it still does belong to the sphere of the trans-objective and trans-sensible as recognised by Maritain. What is more, he understands the trans-objective sphere of metaphysics to ‘introduce us into what is more real than the sensible reality, into that on which that very reality is founded.’⁴² Thus he

40 J. Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, fig. 7, p. 257.

41 B. McGinn, *The Foundation of Mysticism*, p. 306.

42 J. Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 258.

understands the sphere of metaphysics to be a bridge to the highest possible form of intellection, that is mystical knowledge.⁴³

He argues that the ultimate and at the same time primarily discernible object of thought is being. However, he also shows that we are not capable of knowing it in its nudity but only through analogues (e.g., other beings). However, being forms a necessary foundation not only for what is but also for our own intellection. He concludes:

In a sense there is no greater poverty than that of being as being: to perceive it we must cast away every sensible and particular covering. In another sense it is the most consistent and most steadfast of notions; in all that we may know there is nothing which does not depend on it.⁴⁴

However, he insists that being as being just as its counterparts in other orders of reality (principle of non-contradiction) are only intelligible through analogy and its analogues. The first knowledge of 'being' is mediated through other beings pointing in its direction as signs or mirrors. This is even more true about the 'transobjective subjects', that is, those belonging to immaterial reality (angels included) always transcending our ability to fully comprehend them. Maritain says they 'do not surrender themselves to us as objects'.⁴⁵ They are like analogues of analogues. What he means is, that there is a double layer of signification or analogy. One concept grasped in an analogous way is itself an analogue of another one. 'Thus the divine perfections are attained by us in the perfections of the created being, which by the analogy of being makes us pass on uncreated being, whom no mind or spirit can attain to himself.'⁴⁶ He calls the knowledge gained in this way 'trans-intelligible' since he understands it as finding the invisible in the visible.

This very much corresponds to what I've said above about the natural spiritual experience. If understood through the Maritain's prism, it becomes clear that those material objects pointing in the direction of the invisible, spiritual reality can be understood as the analogues of those spiritual entities which are, in return, the analogues of being as being, 'whom no mind or spirit can attain to himself.' Maritain's own thought is very much in accord with Aquinas and subsequent Thomists, who understand our natural knowledge of God to be an analogous one. Even though man is able to come to knowledge of the divine attributes through abstraction, he is not able to grasp their essence as being one and identical. Maritain further explains that the reason is precisely their being analogues of being which is an analogue of the penultimate being as being, the Reality itself, who is who he is, the *actus purus*.

The knowledge about the attributes as analogues of being as being is, according to Maritain, still only a mediated knowledge which can grasp superficial knowledge about being but not grasp fully the very essence of this being. He calls the former 'perinoetic intellection', whereas he refers to the latter as to 'ananoetic intellection'. He discerns three types of ananoetic intellection of things superior to man, two of which are counted in the spheres of metaphysics and one which belongs to the supernatural.⁴⁷

Interestingly, these three types of 'ananoetic intellection' correspond in their account to the types of intellection or knowledge of the spiritual (immaterial) part of reality connected to the three stages of the spiritual life as described by St Teresa. We have seen in the first part of the work that Teresa's spiritual way closely touches upon the question of knowledge, or intellection. It is a way from false knowledge of reality, God and one's self to a true knowledge of all three. Upon the background of Maritain's text, it is necessary to realise that the well-ordered life of the third

43 Further in the texts he deals with the question of the relation between philosophy and mysticism, or rather the relation between metaphysical knowledge and mystical knowledge. Even though he recognises the possibility of mystical knowledge gained by uneducated people, he also argues that in the case of those educated, metaphysical knowledge forms this bridge or starting point for the even higher form of mystical knowledge. *Ibid.*, pp. 341–357.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 265.

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 268–269.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 269.

47 *Ibid.*, pp. 268–271.

dwelling places bears with itself the right, natural knowledge of God. However, it already falls within the sphere of Maritain's ananoetic intellection connected to the sphere of metaphysics. This is because such knowledge is gained through the mediacy of created beings as was shown above, by one's own efforts, but already aims at the object higher than man himself. Since in most cases such knowledge is less clear than the knowledge gained through philosophical abstraction, it is experiential and at the same time its target is the essence of its object (either angel or God), thus it follows that it already transits the sphere of the intelligible into the transobjective, opening itself to the plane of trans-intelligible of the third kind of the ananoetic intellection, the sphere of the supernatural.

Even in the case of the first two kinds of ananoetic intellection, Maritain recognises the analogical knowledge carried by the double signification. Man can gain natural knowledge of the spiritual realm through the mediacy of created, material objects. But, Maritain demonstrates that thus he comes to a knowledge of the spiritual which is still not the end of his intellection because it does not enable man to grasp the essence of being as being but itself only hints at it for it is itself only an analogue of someone infinitely higher and simpler.⁴⁸ Thus, this natural spiritual knowledge still only points in the direction of yet a higher kind of knowledge of the spiritual, of God, to the supernatural one which could grasp the essence of God as being ultimately one, complete and perfect.⁴⁹ For Maritain, such a knowledge is reachable only in the afterlife.

However, this is not necessarily so for Teresa of Avila, who also recognises the need to progress from too humanly an intellection of God, to a higher kind of ananoetic intellection still gained by natural means and further, to the sphere of mystical knowledge, which in itself still contains several steps slowly and gradually leading man to the ability to grasp the oneness of being as being reached in the seventh dwelling place.

What is more, for Maritain just like for Teresa, coming to the supernatural knowledge of God also means coming to the full understanding of one's self. Maritain's argument is based on the notion of the subsistence of the human soul as demonstrated in Aquinas. He understands the subsistence to be the 'metaphysical root' of man's personality hidden in the depth of one's being. 'It is only made manifest by a slow self-conquest, achieved in the course of time. Man must gain his personality like his liberty.'⁵⁰ However, the knowledge of one's own subsistent soul leads man further, to the recognition that being as being, the ultimate existence, is personality himself. Although metaphysical knowledge itself is able to come to the conclusion that the ultimate source of everything, reality itself, is a personality, it cannot proceed further. It is only through revelation in general and personal mystical knowledge that the triune God is revealed as the personality.⁵¹

Just as St Teresa leads us to the unknown of the mystical stage of the spiritual life, where – until the final dwelling place is reached – the intellect is in its knowledge of God as if blinded, going through the 'night of the spirit', so also does J. Maritain understand it to be a state of the loss of conceptual knowledge and puts it in direct relation to apophatic theology or *thelogia negativa* and laboriously explains that experiential knowledge gained in this way is far more than a simple lack of knowledge in one who had not made an attempt to understand in the first place. This kind of experiential knowledge belongs according to him already to the third kind of ananoetic intellection, to the mystical knowledge par excellence. He deems it to be penetrating, unitive and divine, carried on the shoulders of *faith* and enabled by the *gifts of the Holy Spirit*. Faith is understood as a bridge between metaphysical and mystical knowledge and as a bridge between the natural and

48 'Indeed the divine essence, which surpasses every concept, could only be intellectually possessed or grasped if it is seen by itself and without concept.' Ibid., p. 298.

49 He provides an excellent account of the analogical way of our own knowledge of God in *Degrees of Knowledge*, pp. 276–284, showing there that without the last stage of supernatural intellection, the essence of God remains an object of our knowledge attained and known through created things which at once resemble and infinitely differ from it. So, he comes to the conclusion that divine essence can be attained by our metaphysical intellection but not penetrated by it.

50 The whole part 'The Name of Person' is worth reading, Ibid., pp. 284–291, but the direct citation is from p. 286.

51 Ibid., p. 290.

supernatural life. However, Maritain still understands ‘faith’ to be an analogy (he uses the term ‘super-analogy’) of what is hidden in God. It is simpler and humbler than the analogy which the metaphysics use and, despite that, this analogy still communicates the very essence of God. Maritain shows that the names Father, Son and Holy Ghost are not metaphorical but describe what the divine persons formally and intrinsically are.⁵²

The knowledge of faith must, by a divine grace of inspiration and illumination – and yet always in a trans-luminous obscurity, which will remain as long as God is not seen in himself – cease to advance from afar and at a distance, i.e. must become experimental and advance apophatically, in freeing itself from the limited mode of concepts, not by an intellectual knowledge which transcends yes and no, but by a passion for those things that are divine which tastes and touches in the No the infinite profundity of the Yes.⁵³

The final account about the necessity of faith, experience and the role of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, brings us back to the work of K. O’Reiley, who in his own work proceeds very much in the same direction as Maritain. Although K. O’Reiley does not provide a thorough analysis of the various modes of intellection, he also understands faith to be a bridge between natural and supernatural knowledge (and further speaks about charity and grace as companions of the faith).

The change of natural into supernatural knowledge, or the ‘epistemic transformation’ as he calls it, is caused by the gift of faith. Together with the gifts of the Holy Spirit understood as habits, faith perfects the intellect and the will making it more apt to receive divine revelation, or mystical knowledge as described above, on the one hand, and directs man’s intellect and will towards the final beatitude, as we have seen in St Teresa on the other. K. O’Reiley understands faith to be the medium thanks to which the ultimate beatitude can already exist in us during this life,⁵⁴ just as J. Maritain did. He follows Aquinas’s train of thought and shows that even for Aquinas the mediacy of faith leads to the perfection of human nature by the supernatural, not to its destruction.⁵⁵ He goes on explaining Aquinas: since faith is directed towards the final end of the ultimate beatitude, it means that the beatitude is already present in the faith *virtually*, just as the whole of science is already contained in its principles. And therefore, the beginning of the final beatitude, or the beginning of the beatific vision is already rooted in this present state of life, even though the beatific vision is possible only in the life to come.⁵⁶ P. Macdonald remarks on behalf of this topic: ‘while faith indeed constitutes a radically imperfect mode of epistemic access to God, it nevertheless “carries” our minds all the way to God, and consequently prepares our minds for the full knowledge or direct “vision” of God that we are promised in the life to come.’⁵⁷ Moreover, K. O’Reiley sees as a necessary part of the living faith the dynamics of the interinvolvement between the intellect and the will.⁵⁸

In other words, he expresses in a more explicit way what St Teresa describes in vivid imagery. Faith, nurtured by a life of virtue and prayer, involves both the intellect and the will. Thus, as I believe, K. O’Reiley gives additional support to my assumption that precisely due to this interinvolvement the intellect may be carried from one mode of intellection (that is from the natural one, or using the vocabulary of J. Maritain, from the natural ananoetic intellection) to the other – the supernatural – by the will. The will thus provides for the intellect during the ‘gap’ of the night of the spirit. It is possible due to the increase of faith which necessarily leads to an increase of charity, as K. O’Reiley argues.⁵⁹ St Teresa also describes both the increase of faith and charity in the supernatural stage of the spiritual life.

52 Ibid., p. 299.

53 Ibid., p. 301.

54 K. O’Reiley, *Hermeneutics of Knowing and Loving*, pp. 189–190.

55 Ibid., p. 191

56 Ibid., pp. 191–196.

57 P. Macdonald, ‘The Eschatological Character of our Knowledge of God’, p. 264, cited in K. O’Reiley, *Hermeneutics of Knowing and Loving*, p. 194.

58 Ibid., p. 196.

59 Ibid., pp. 199–204.

Further, K. O'Reilley puts mystical knowledge into a close relation to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the gifts of understanding and wisdom. He sees a fundamental distinction between both the *ratio* and *intellectus*, respectively the knowledge gained through both, and he repeats that the 'gifted understanding' or mystical knowledge is not discursive (as Teresa herself stressed many times) in any way but goes immediately to the essence of a thing and reminds us that, for Aquinas, we can gain this knowledge through the light of the divine intellect. The non-discursiveness of such a mode of understanding is, according to K. O'Reilley, given by the non-discursiveness of God's own knowledge, of which mystical knowledge participates.⁶⁰ However, even though he admits the possibility to gain insight into many things divine, he does not admit the possibility to grasp the oneness of God in this present state of life and thus deems this kind of understanding to remain imperfect.⁶¹ Let us recall that J. Maritain did just the same thing.

Now, what is clear from the previous is one thing explicitly mentioned also by Aquinas himself and that is that both the beatific vision and the imperfect knowledge of God gained through the gifts of the Holy spirit is a participatory knowledge, which means that man participates in the self-knowledge of God and hence also participates in the very being of God. We can find this feature in Teresa's own account of the indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity in the very centre of one's being. Maritain explains the way towards the beatific vision as a way to reach the unmediated understanding of the unity and simplicity of God as being. A.N. Williams, interestingly, points at the uniqueness of the Thomistic understanding of this participation in the divine life, too. According to her, Aquinas made a considerable step from the previous notions of *theosis*, divinisation. Unlike his predecessors, who considered the *theosis* solely as something to be reached in the future, Aquinas extended this concept even backwards in time 'portraying the creature as participating in divine being from the first moment of her existence', which provides 'the base for all other varieties or degrees of participation in divine being.'⁶²

This is stunning not only for its novelty in relation to the older, patristic sources, but because it gives us the opportunity to grasp Teresa's introductory and indeed also final setting of the stage. In the first dwelling places she struggles to explain that God is present in the centre of the soul from the very beginning of its existence irrespective of the fact whether the soul knows about this divine presence or not. Interestingly, at the beginning of the seventh dwelling place, she re-evokes the same image. However, there is a difference. At the beginning of the *Interior Castle*, her claim is simply an unfound claim. She is afraid she will not be believed. She also presupposes that anyone at the beginning of the spiritual journey is quite oblivious about the divine indwelling. On the contrary, at the end of the journey, at the seventh dwelling place, the same claim is no longer unfounded but supported by all the previous experience. Moreover, this time the one who has reached this stage is expected to *understand* this indwelling and even more – he is expected to have a direct, unmediated insight into the very reality of the indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity in the core of his own being. The difference between the beginning and the end does not consist in the divine indwelling where there was nothing like that in the beginning, but rather in man's knowledge, his understanding, that God dwells within his very heart and has ever done so.

Teresa's conviction then echoes Aquinas's own teaching as Williams presents it: every person has from the very beginning of his existence participated in the divine essence, or to say it differently, God has been present in the core of each human person from the very beginning of his life. The divinisation then is realised on the level of the intellect and intellection, not on the level of the being of the person (soul). The human intellect is not only illumined but it is elevated by the light of glory to a higher state, or to put it otherwise, the intellect is by the light of glory enabled to an act which is super-natural to it, and that is the insight into the essence of God. However, this

60 Ibid., pp. 214–215.

61 Ibid., pp. 205–212.

62 A.N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 66.

elevation beyond the intellect's nature is given in the rootedness, so to say, of the human being in the very being of God.

However, even before reaching such an elevated state of the insight into the essence of God, man has and can have 'contact' with his own root in God through faith, and *ipso facto* also through charity. These two virtues are especially connected to the intellect in the case of faith and the will in the case of charity. Kevin O'Reilley treats this topic quite extensively and since it falls rather under the topic of theology, I will not delve into it at this point. However, it is important for understanding St Teresa in this respect. We have seen in the previous chapters that the process of spiritual development proceeds from the natural to the supernatural stage and that the supernatural stage is closely related to the will. St Teresa also stresses the importance of love or charity towards God to use more appropriate Thomistic language. I have suggested in the previous chapter that the reason lies simply in the exchange of the intellect's way of knowledge – the natural for the supernatural. Thus, the remark that one can already have such radical (from *radix*, root) contact with the divine essence through faith and charity is of no little importance. For this means that even the previous ways of knowing God already direct man to the very divine essence. Thus, man participates in the divine essence 'more actively' already by his acts of faith, be it through prayer or devotions, etc.

Williams, explaining Aquinas, depicts this topic with the example of man being created in the image and likeness of God.⁶³ This is quite useful since some of the Fathers of the Church have discerned between the image embedded in man's very nature and the likeness towards which man must yet come. However, Williams shows that Aquinas goes beyond this division and in fact discerns three stages of gradual likening to God. First, from a 'likeness embedded in our nature, to a likeness that increases in this life through grace, to a likeness in the next life.' What she further stresses is that in Aquinas these three steps appear as a continuity of the same process.⁶⁴ She adds: 'The implication is that one level of likeness depends on the other and that each succeeding level contains the preceding one within it, so that the likeness of glory encompasses also the likeness of grace and nature.'⁶⁵ This has two important implications.

First, it follows that the final beatific vision can be understood not only as a perfection of the likeness of God being realised in knowing and loving, but also as a final stage of a process beginning already in this life. Reaching the beatific vision is thus unthinkable without this process. K. O'Reilley comments on it aptly when he writes that 'ultimate beatitude or eternal life, however, has its beginning in this life by faith'.⁶⁶ Williams demonstrates this by reference to Gregory of Nyssa, stating that 'each human being possesses one life, which is nothing other than a never-ending process of growth towards God.'⁶⁷

Second, if we pay close attention to Aquinas's distinction, we can realise that it strongly resembles the three stages of the spiritual life as Teresa treats them in the *Interior Castle*. I have shown that there is a natural spiritual end which man can reach by his own efforts and which Teresa describes in the third dwelling places. Now, the necessary condition to reach this state is to live in accordance with the divine law, prayer, life from the sacraments and acts of charity. At this point we can reformulate the whole thing – the natural spiritual end reachable by man's own effort leads to the full realisation of the image of God on the level of nature. This can be further prolonged in the mystical stage of the spiritual life where this likeness is increased through the infused gift of

63 And she is not alone. There is an excellent dissertation treating Aquinas's notion of the indwelling Divine Persons which provides a detailed analysis of the ways in which man is the image and likeness of God and which also explicitly speaks about the 'deification' or 'theosis'. '[T]he infusion of grace is a process of deification resulting in an elevation of the rational creature to a point where he shares the very nature of God.' William J. Hill, O.P., *Proper Relations to the Indwelling Divine Persons: A Speculative Consideration of the Possibility of Such Relations in the Doctrine of St. Thomas* (Rome: Pontificum Aetheneum Angelicum [dissertation], 1952), p. 33.

64 A.N. Williams, *The Ground of Union*, pp. 68–70.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

66 K. O'Reilley, *Hermeneutics of Knowing and Loving*, p. 191, but also mentioned on p. 190.

67 A.N. Williams, *The Ground of Union*, p. 79.

faith and charity flowing into in the beatific vision of the afterlife where the likeness to God is fully realised. However, Teresa portrays the mystical marriage and introduces the topic by saying ‘what we hold by faith we understand by sight’, indicating that the mystical marriage is already the full realisation of man’s likeness to God or is some pre-stage.

What is even more interesting is that the ‘degrees of divinisation’ do not correspond only to the degrees of the spiritual life but also to the degrees of knowledge as has been shown in this part. M. Wadell summarises it well. He shows that Aquinas discerns three possible modes in which the thing can be known: either by the presence of the essence in the knower, or by the presence of similitude or through the image created upon something in which that image appears. Only the first of these modes pertains to the vision of the divine essence enjoyed through the light of glory.⁶⁸ Interestingly, Wadell’s enumeration of the type of knowledge corresponds to the three ages of the spiritual life in reverse order. Thus, the third type, through an image gained as if in a ‘mirror’, could be paired with the natural knowledge of God and, realising the natural likeness to God, the second type is found in the mystical stages prior to the mystical marriage and goes hand in hand with the realisation of the likeness through infused grace, and the third type, that of the ‘presence of the essence’ would be in Aquinas paired with the beatific vision and thus also with the full realisation of man’s likeness to God. The question of whether the last stage is already present in the mystical marriage and so also in this life still remains open.

7.3.2. PARTICIPATION IN DIVINE ESSENCE BY CHARITY

Up until this moment I have been mostly discussing the character of the mystical marriage in Teresa and the beatific vision in Aquinas. Then, I have shown that the inquiry leads us through the realm of intellection. I have also briefly mentioned the importance of love as an infused gift, which is another piece of puzzle. Just as faith, so also charity towards God is a medium through which man may participate in the future glory. A.N. Williams shows another dimension of Aquinas’s thought on charity which is its unitive character. This unitive character is important for two reasons. First, unlike in case of knowledge, respectively the unhindered intellectual insight into divine essence in the beatific vision, Aquinas speaks about possible union with God through charity which, second, need not be postponed to the afterlife.⁶⁹

Williams shows that Aquinas does not consider charity to be such that the two joined in it would remain distinct entities, nor does he see their connection as the melting of two essences together. Rather, Aquinas suggests a closeness which is best understood as a participation in being. So, it is not ‘only’ participation of the intellect in divine intellect, or knowledge in divine knowledge, it is also a participation in divine love. Aquinas, according to Williams, finds ecstasy as the ultimate expression of such a participation. Ecstasy is a sign of a close union while it presupposes that the individuality of both the lover and beloved remains unhindered. Another important aspect to it is the spiritual joy. Such a union of love is understood as a mutual relationship indication of God’s own desire for true friendship with his creature.⁷⁰

Even now the similarity to Teresa’s own teaching is striking. However, Williams adds some more useful insights on behalf of the topic of the union. Even though she is convinced that Aquinas places the ultimate and perfect union in the afterlife, she is nevertheless equally convinced that the imperfect union is according to Thomas possible already in this state of life, or rather, that the character of the union achievable in this life is similar to the union reached in the afterlife.⁷¹

Further, the union between man and God presupposes God’s desire for friendship with his creation. However, this union is not reachable by man’s own effort or by man’s unaided charity. Therefore, natural, human charity needs strengthening by divine charity. This infusion of charity

68 M. Wadell, ‘Aquinas on the Light of Glory’, pp. 114–115.

69 A.N. Williams, *The Ground of Union*, pp. 74–82.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 77–78.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

enables the union of two fundamentally distinct beings and at the same time preserves man's freedom. Williams concludes: 'He [Aquinas] wishes to maintain the closest possible union between God and humanity while at the same time keeping firmly separated Uncreated and Created. [...] The Creator has goodness, charity and existence of himself, whereas the creature has all only through the Creator.' She makes a strong point throughout the whole chapter and that is that Aquinas wishes to hold the union between the Creator and human person while keeping distinct their personalities and natures.⁷²

Now, this last point shows us another dimension to what has been shown several times before, that is, that the mystical stage of the spiritual life is, according to Teresa, carried and deepened mainly through the mediacy of will and with a strong emphasis on love leading man to ever deeper union with God and resulting in supernatural knowledge.

However, in stating 'What we hold by faith we understand by sight', Teresa makes it clear that the knowledge or understanding gained in the mystical marriage is yet of another kind than the mystical knowledge gained in the previous stages of the spiritual life. There is another passage which is worth taking into account, which says:

In the spiritual marriage, there is still much less remembrance of the body because this secret union takes place in the very interior center of the soul, which must be where God Himself is, and in my opinion there is no need of any door for Him to enter. I say there is no need of any door because everything that has been said up until now seems to take place by means of the senses and faculties, and this appearance of the humanity of the Lord must also. But that which comes to pass in the union of the spiritual marriage is very different. The Lord appears in this center of the soul, not in an imaginative vision but in an intellectual one, although more delicate than those mentioned.⁷³

This citation once again stresses the fundamental difference between the knowledge gained within the previous stages of the mystical life and the one gained within the mystical marriage. The crucial sentence is this: '*Everything that has been said seems to take place by means of the senses and faculties. [...] But [...] in the spiritual marriage [...] the Lord appears in this centre of the soul.*' The importance lies in the first part of the expression, for it indicates that indeed all of the previous experiences and their respective kinds of knowledge are mediated through the senses, faculties and thus their powers. It follows that the previous steps of knowledge are mediated through some kind of *species* as the forms which the powers of the soul 'use', so that man may understand. In this respect, the question of whether these mediating forms were gained naturally or supernaturally is irrelevant. From the second part of the citation, on the other hand, it follows that the knowledge bound to the mystical marriage is not mediated through the senses or the powers of the soul. In other words, it is *immediate*.

Further, there is the question regarding the similarity and/or difference between the knowledge bound to the mystical marriage, which seems to be a participation in divine essence, and the knowledge gained 'only' through our participation in the essence of God by the infused gifts of supernatural faith, charity and grace.

First, even though we may argue that these infused gifts, as well as the very expression of the Articles of the faith, put us into immediate contact with the divine essence, our knowledge, however, does not cease to be mediated by the created species only for this reason, whereas the second type of knowledge does.

Second, K. O'Reilly argues that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gift of wisdom and understanding are necessary for salvation and that these gifts put one into immediate contact with the Articles of Faith, thus already communicating the knowledge of the essence of the divine life to the soul. If I understand it correctly, K. O'Reilly supposes that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to anyone

⁷² Ibid., pp. 79–82.

⁷³ M 7,2,3.

who lives according to the Gospel, receives the sacraments and tries to promote his virtues. These gifts of the Holy Spirit connect man to the contents of the Faith, or the Articles of the Faith, bringing man into contact with the divine essence. There is nothing wrong with this, but there is no possibility to tell apart mystics and non-mystics, since this seems to apply to every Christian living according to his faith. Also, it does not say to what degree such a participation is conscious.

On the other hand, St Teresa, while describing the mystical stage of the spiritual life, seems to have something other on her mind. Teresa in the *Interior Castle* and more explicitly in the *Way of Perfection* makes it clear that according to her opinion, neither the mystical life, nor the contemplation and the knowledge bound to these spiritual stages, are necessary for salvation. They are optional, desirable perhaps, but not necessary. What is more, in her detailed analysis of the supernatural stage of the spiritual life and of supernatural knowledge, she seems to provide an account of a knowledge more explicit, if I may use the expression, than would be the somewhat 'implicit' knowledge gained through participation in the divine essence through the medium of infused gifts. This is shown in the images she uses (e.g., beautiful treasury) in the case of the knowledge gained up to the sixth dwelling places and the principal quote of this part, by which she indicates a difference in the knowledge through faith and through the sight, or insight.

She is not able to describe the last mode of knowledge and no wonder. If we built upon what has been said in the previous parts, it is clear that the direct insight into the essence of God (be it in this or in the future life) transcends any mediated mode of the knowledge of God, since God himself, as he is in himself, transcends any created category and cannot therefore be entangled or mediated by them. And even this unmediated direct insight into the very essence of God is knowledge of God only in as much as man is able to know him, not in as much as God is knowable. If, therefore, the knowledge related to the mystical marriage stage surpasses the knowledge through faith and consists in such an intellectual insight, it must be a knowledge unmediated and therefore inexplicable. Teresa is not more explicit about it for she cannot be.

The second difference from Aquinas, O'Reilly and Maritain is this: all of these insist that it is impossible for a human intellect to gain a direct grasp of the oneness of God, of his very essence, in this present state of life and reserve this knowledge for the state of beatific vision only. Teresa, on the contrary, provides a description of the mystical marriage which hints at the possibility that she actually had gained insight into the oneness of the Triune God. Moreover, she pairs the knowledge gained in rapture to the previous types of knowledge, and unlike Aquinas recognises one higher mode of knowledge reachable in this life. That is to say, that Aquinas recognised the knowledge gained in the rapture to be the highest possible mode of knowledge man may gain in this life and, even so, he considered it to be an imperfect participation in the future beatific vision.

7.4. THE RECONCILIATION OF MARTHA AND MARY

If we are finally to find the answer about the nature of the mystical marriage, there is another feature to be considered and this is the image of the reconciliation of 'Martha and Mary'. I have touched upon this topic several times during the work but never given it proper treatment. Now, Martha and Mary have traditionally been the image of the active and the contemplative. Their 'reconciliation' then refers to the harmony between both ways of life. This is without doubt the first and foremost level of meaning also for St Teresa. However, I believe there is more to say and the simple statement 'reconciliation between the active and contemplative life' bears deeper connotations than is obvious at first sight. To show these connotations is the task of this short part. I will provide several more quotations to ensure that we will understand Teresa properly.

Why do I think that the 'reconciliation' is more complicated than the simple statement? I hope I have succeeded in the previous chapters to show that St Teresa's teaching is more structured and cohesive than it is usually regarded. I also hope I have succeeded in showing that the images and symbols she uses are not random. So, I don't think the choice to treat the reconciliation in the

seventh dwelling place was random either. On the contrary, I am convinced she used it in the very last chamber for a purpose. Moreover, since she speaks about contemplation from the beginning of the mystical stage, that is, from the fourth dwelling places, if the reconciliation referred only to the ability to live both the active and the contemplative life together, there would be no reason for postponing this image to the very last moment.

Let us consider several parts of Teresa's text:

You may think that as a result the soul will be outside itself and so absorbed that it will be unable to be occupied with anything else. On the contrary, the soul is much more occupied than before with everything pertaining to the service of God; and once its duties are over it remains with that enjoyable company.⁷⁴

Before interpreting this citation I would like to compare it to other parts of the text:

The Lord puts the soul in this dwelling of His, which is the center of the soul itself.⁷⁵ It should not be thought that the faculties, senses, and passions are always in this peace; the soul is, yes. But in those other dwelling places, times of war, trial, and fatigue are never lacking; however, they are such that they do not take the soul from its place and its peace; that is, as a rule. [...] That there are trials and sufferings and that at the same time the soul is in peace is a difficult thing to explain.⁷⁶

And while suffering some great trials a little after God granted her this favor, she complained of that part of the soul, as Martha complained of Mary, and sometimes pointed out that it was there always enjoying that quietude at its own pleasure while leaving her in the midst of so many trials and occupations that she could not keep it company. This will seem to you, daughters, to be foolishness, but it truly happens in this way. Although we know that the soul is all one, what I say is no mere fancy; the experience is very common.⁷⁷

Believe me, Martha and Mary must join together in order to show hospitality to the Lord and have Him always present and not host Him badly by failing to give Him something to eat. How would Mary, always seated at His feet, provide Him with food if her sister did not help her? His food is that in every way possible we draw souls that they may be saved and praise Him always.⁷⁸

In these rather long excerpts from the text of the seventh dwelling place, we can mark several interesting points. In these passages, Teresa does not refer to the active versus contemplative life, but rather to the active versus contemplative *parts of the soul*. What I haven't put into the direct quote for the sake of brevity, is her discernment between the soul and the spirit. She clearly marks the 'spirit' to be the highest part of the soul, or the 'centre' of the soul.

Further, in the previous chapters I have shown that Teresa discerns the lower and higher (or the inferior and superior) parts of the soul, the distinguishing aspect being their relation to the body. However, in this part the distinction does not seem to copy the previous one. She clearly identifies the highest part of the soul converging with and only with the seventh dwelling place as the 'spirit',

74 'Pareceros ha que, según esto, no andaré en sí, sino tan embebida que no pueda entender en nada. - Mucho más que antes, en todo lo que es servicio de Dios, y en faltando las ocupaciones, se queda con aquella agradable compañía.' M 7,1,8.

75 'Pues tornando a lo que decíamos, en metiendo el Señor al alma en esta morada suya, que es el centro de la misma alma[...].' M 7,2,9.

76 'No se entienda que las potencias y sentidos y pasiones están siempre en esta paz; el alma sí; mas en estotras moradas no deja de haber tiempos de guerra y de trabajos y fatigas; mas son de manera que no se quita de su paz y puesto: esto es lo ordinario.[...] porque decir que hay trabajos y penas, y que el alma se está en paz, es cosa dificultosa.' M 7,2,10.

77 '[...]Y andando con grandes trabajos, que poco después que Dios le hizo esta merced tuvo, se quejaba de ella, a manera de Marta cuando se quejó de María, y algunas veces la decía que se estaba ella siempre gozando de aquella quietud a su placer, y la deja a ella en tantos trabajos y ocupaciones, que no la puede tener compañía. Esto os parecerá, hijas, desatino, mas verdaderamente pasa así; que aunque se entiende que el alma está toda junta, no es antojo lo que he dicho, que es muy ordinario.' M 7,1,10-11.

78 'Creedme, que Marta y María han de andar juntas para hospedar al Señor y tenerle siempre consigo, y no le hacer mal hospedaje no le dando de comer. ¿Cómo se lo diera María, sentada siempre a sus pies, si su hermana no le ayudara? Su manjar es que de todas las maneras que pudiéremos lleguemos almas para que se salven y siempre le alaben.' M 7,4,12.

whereas the previous 'layers' of the soul are depicted simply as 'the soul'. So it seems Teresa uses three different distinguishing aspects in connection to the human intellective soul. The first one is the most general and it is that just mentioned: the distinguishing into the inferior and superior parts of the soul. This enables her to treat the 'smaller units' (that is, the individual dwelling places) together, when need be. The second aspect is the distinguishing into the individual dwelling places. This aspect enables her to describe not only each individual 'layer' of the soul but also the individual steps of the spiritual ladder. The third aspect is the one found in the last dwelling place and that is the 'soul-spirit' division.

Her text makes it clear that only the last 'dwelling place' can be marked as the 'spirit', whereas the 'higher part of the soul' includes all of the mystical dwelling places beginning with the fourth ones. Therefore, it is clear that these two respects are not identical. Now, it was also shown that the mystical dwelling places are closely connected to the realm of the intellect and the will (as an intellectual power) respectively. Now, if the spirit is the 'highest part', then it follows that it must be the highest part of the intellect. The highest part of the intellect, however, is called the 'passive intellect' which is able to receive 'light' communication understanding either from the 'active human intellect' or from God. If the latter is true, then the passive intellect (or spirit) can receive the divine light either mediated or immediate. Only the latter pertains to the knowledge of the mystical marriage.

Now, Teresa in the above citations speaks about the apparent division of the soul. In the previous dwelling places this division was demonstrated during all the ecstatic experiences. She often marks down which of the powers of the soul are recollected and which of them are active. There may also occur instances when all of the powers of the soul, the senses including, are recollected to such a degree that the state resembles death. However, in the seventh dwelling place the 'division' is depicted upon a different distinguishing aspect and also upon a different image. Here, she does not refer to the 'lesser' powers of the soul, but only to the 'spirit', to the highest part of the intellect and says about it that it always remains in peace and recollection contemplating God while being enlightened by God himself immediately. Whereas 'the soul' (that is, all the other powers of the soul), can remain very well active, exercising their usual activity and being 'active'. This is demonstrated upon the image of Martha and Mary. In other words, Teresa does not refer 'only' to the ability to reconcile the active life in the world with the contemplative life but she refers to an 'inner reconciliation' between various powers of the soul.

In the abovementioned citations Teresa expresses two things similarly important. First, she in fact says that man may experience serious spiritual and emotional turmoil while being *at the same time* in the deepest centre of his own soul absolutely peaceful and contemplating. That is an 'inner dimension'. However, there is the second meaning which represents, let us say, an 'outward dimension'. By this expression she means that man may be very active in the everyday life, fulfilling his daily duties while at the same time remain contemplating.

There is another interesting aspect to it. It pertains to the spiritual delights. In the fourth dwelling places, where Teresa provided a very fine and detailed analyses between the *contentos* and *gustos*, she said:

His Majesty [...] produces this delight with the greatest peace and quiet and sweetness in the very interior part of ourselves [...] Afterward the delight fills everything; this water overflows through all the dwelling places and faculties until reaching the body. This is why I said that it begins in God and ends in ourselves. For, certainly, as anyone who may have experienced it will see, the whole exterior man enjoys this spiritual delight and sweetness.⁷⁹

Now, I find this intriguing since Aquinas speaks of a delight flowing into the body in connection

⁷⁹ 'Su Majestad quiere, [...] produce con grandísima paz y quietud y suavidad de lo muy interior de nosotros mismos, [...] que después todo lo hinche - vase revertiendo este agua por todas las moradas y potencias hasta llegar al cuerpo; que por eso dije que comienza de Dios y acaba en nosotros; que cierto, como verá quien lo hubiere probado, todo el hombre exterior goza de este gusto y suavidad.' M 4,2,4.

to the beatific vision in very much the same terms. Moreover, in speaking about the beatific vision he also speaks about the union of the powers of the soul within the soul itself leading to a unity not only with God but also to a unity of the human soul. In the theological part of the work I have, however, shown that Teresa in her teaching about the spiritual life speaks about a very similar phenomenon. Moreover, the union between the powers of the soul can be understood in the light of Aquinas's own perspective. In this sense, the 'reconciliation' between Martha and Mary in the aspect of the reconciliation between the individual 'parts' of the soul can be easily seen as the union of the powers of the soul which Aquinas reserves for the afterlife.

So, is the mystical marriage a beatific vision in the body or not? At this point, we could easily answer in the affirmative. But I have not yet treated one very important question and that is whether the mystical marriage is a permanent state or not. The previous citations point in the direction that it is – the highest part of the intellect remains always contemplating God and the mystical marriage brings not only peace but also the end of desire and great spiritual joy or delight flowing even into the body, just as happens in the beatific vision (or after the general resurrection). However, there are other passages which we have to take into account.

7.5. (NON-)PERMANENCE OF MYSTICAL MARRIAGE

You must understand that there is the greatest difference between all the previous visions and those of this dwelling place. Between the spiritual betrothal and the spiritual marriage the difference is as great as that which exists between two who are betrothed and two who can no longer be separated.⁸⁰

This introductory citation opens up two important questions. First, it is the question mentioned at the very beginning of the chapter: is or is not the mystical marriage a permanent state? Second, if there is such a remarkable difference between the mystical betrothal and mystical marriage, some kind of change must take place, leading to the question of what change. Both of these questions are intimately connected to the question about the possible identity of the mystical marriage and the beatific vision. However, there are two more important elements to these questions, namely, the question of the possibility to sin and freedom and its preservation before the death.

To express this problem differently: if the mystical marriage was in fact a pre-mortem beatific vision in the body, it would mean that man was no longer able to sin (gravely), since he would be naturally necessitated to choose only God. And hence, would the natural necessitation towards God mean in effect an end of free volition?

To answer these questions, we need to proceed in smaller steps. First, I am going to show what Teresa says on behalf of the permanence of the mystical marriage. Afterwards, I will show what she says on behalf of its temporality. Third, the questions of sin and freedom will be treated. Finally, I will try to provide an explanation that would be able to explain the obvious contradiction between her statements and would actually make any sense. The final point will bring us to the brink of the next section, where not only the nature of the mystical marriage but also the nature of change between all the previous stages and the mystical marriage will be treated.

Teresa treats the indissolubility of the state of the mystical marriage in the perspective of a considerable difference between this state and all the previous ones, namely the raptures and previous kinds of union.⁸¹ Unlike the previous 'unions', the mystical marriage cannot be dissolved, the 'two who are betrothed and two who can no longer be separated.'⁸² Beside this straightforward

80 '[P]orque entended que hay grandísima diferencia de todas las pasadas a las de esta morada, y tan grande del desposorio espiritual, al matrimonio espiritual, como le hay entre dos desposados, a los que ya no se pueden apartar.' M 7,2,2.

81 M 7,1,5. M 7,2,2–5.

82 M 7,2,2. '[P]orque de tal manera ha querido juntarse con la criatura, que así como los que ya no se pueden apartar, no se quiere apartar El de ella.' M 7,2,3. M 7,2,4, where she tries to illustrate her point by making a simile to the rain falling into the river, a stream flowing in the sea or bright light entering into the same room from two different windows. She concludes: 'There is no way of separating the two.' / '[N]o habrá remedio de apartarse.'

statement, she shows that she does not really believe that anyone reaching this state would be willing to turn himself from God in many more places in the text. It is – as is usual with Teresa – shown in the imagery she uses to compensate for her lack of appropriate expressions.

It should be understood that this presence is not felt so fully, I mean so clearly, as when revealed the first time or at other times when God grants the soul this gift. For if the presence were felt so clearly, the soul would find it impossible to be engaged in anything else or even to live among people. But even though the presence is not perceived with this very clear light, the soul finds itself in this company every time it takes notice. Let's say that the experience resembles that of a person who after being in a bright room with others finds himself, once the shutters are closed, in darkness. The light by which he could see them is taken away. Until it returns he doesn't see them, but not for that reason does he stop knowing they are present. It might be asked whether the soul can see them when it so desires and the light returns. To see them does not lie in its power, but depends on when our Lord desires that the window of the intellect be opened. Great is the mercy He shows in never departing from the soul and in desiring that it perceive Him so manifestly.⁸³

This citation fully shows Teresa's struggle to explain that the mystical marriage is and is not permanent at the same time. It serves as a bridge to the next point, that of the transiency of the mystical marriage. But before that, let us concentrate on the 'permanent dimension' of the whole thing. She compares the mystical marriage either to one water current having two different sources, or to the room where the light coming from two different directions becomes one. Further, she is referring to the image of the shutters that temporarily close off 'the light' without the person leaving the room.

Now, the last image seems to me to be a most apt one, since it depicts her struggle the best. Mystical marriage in this train of thought is like the room in which man finds himself – as a common room shared by both man's soul and God. It should be recalled in this connection her constant claim that the mystical marriage is reached in the last, seventh, dwelling place ('room'), where the King of Kings himself dwells. Therefore, the shared room is a reference to this last dwelling place. However, the image of the light (not) coming through the shutters is a reference to knowledge, since we have seen that the both Teresa and Aquinas refer to the knowledge as mediated by 'light', either by the light of the active intellect in the case of natural knowledge or by the light of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual/mystical kind of the wayfaring state or even by the Light of Glory in the case of the beatific vision. Moreover, Teresa herself mentions the image of light bringing knowledge in her account about the nature of mystical knowledge and in what it consists in the parts of the text cited at the beginning of the chapter.

Therefore, it seems that the image of the light (not) coming through the shutters refers to the actuality/potentiality of the knowledge related to the mystical marriage, that is, to direct insight into the essence of God. However, the 'light' not actually coming through the shutters does not force man to leave the room.

Now, there is a situation where two types of symbolic expression intermingle. There is the symbol of the 'shared' room paired with another symbol of 'the light coming through the shutters'. What I think Teresa tries to explain by the use of the combination of these two images are two elements of the mystical marriage – the use of the image of the shared room refers to the permanence of the mystical marriage whereas the image of the light (not) coming through the shutters expresses its transience. At this point it is necessary to ask what these images refer to. I think that

83 'El traer esta presencia entiéndese que no es tan enteramente, digo tan claramente, como se le manifiesta la primera vez y otras algunas que quiere Dios hacerle este regalo; porque si esto fuese, era imposible entender en otra cosa, ni aun vivir entre la gente; mas aunque no es con esta tan clara luz siempre que advierte se halla con esta compañía. Digamos ahora como una persona que estuviese en una muy clara pieza con otras y cerrasen las ventanas y se quedase a oscuras; no porque se quitó la luz para verlas y que hasta tornar la luz no las ve, deja de entender que están allí. Es de preguntar si cuando torna la luz y las quiere tornar a ver, si puede. Esto no está en su mano, sino cuando quiere nuestro Señor que se abra la ventana del entendimiento; harta misericordia la hace en nunca se ir de con ella y querer que ella lo entienda tan entendido.' M 7,1,9.

the image of the 'shared room' refers to the level of the being of the soul (ontology) whereas the image of the 'light (not) coming through the shutters' refers to the level of knowledge (epistemology). So it follows that the mystical marriage is a permanent state on the ontological level whereas it is transient on the epistemological one.

Moreover, Teresa clearly states that man's nature would not be able to hold such a strong, immediate knowledge or insight into the divine essence all the time; it would not be able to return to the ordinary life and would probably die. These are the reasons why Teresa is convinced that this kind of knowledge after being given recedes back a little, 'making room' for the ordinary intellection and occasional mystical experience of a lesser degree (e.g., ecstasy) once again, but it also moves man to be very active 'in the world' without ceasing to be contemplative. From a different point of view this is what enables the 'reconciliation between Martha and Mary' treated above.

Further, this cessation of actual insight into the nature of God has further effects. Teresa claims:

Now then let us deal with the divine and spiritual marriage, although this great favor does not come to its perfect fullness as long as we live; for if we were to withdraw from God, this remarkable blessing would be lost.⁸⁴

It seems I'm saying that when the soul reaches this state in which God grants it this favor, it is sure of its salvation and safe from falling again. *I do not say such a thing*, and wherever I so speak that it seems the soul is secure, this should be taken to mean as long as the divine Majesty keeps it in His hand and it does not offend Him. At least I know certainly that *the soul doesn't consider itself safe* even though it sees itself in this state and the state has lasted for some years. But it goes about with much greater fear than before, guarding itself from any small offense against God and with the strongest desires to serve Him, as will be said further on.⁸⁵

These two excerpts make it clear that Teresa did not consider the mystical marriage to be the most perfect state attainable but 'only' the most perfect state attainable in this life. Neither does she hold that man cannot lose it, as is especially obvious in the second excerpt. What is more, she admits at least a theoretical possibility that man may commit such a grave 'offence' against God that he would lose this mystical marriage, hence her remark about much care put into not offending God in anything.

However, there is one peculiar remark: 'At least, I know certainly that the soul doesn't consider itself safe.' As I understand it, we are touching on the previous topic once again, and that is a certain discrepancy between what happens on the level of being and what happens on the level of the intellection. If I understand it correctly, Teresa by this uncertain remark, admits a possibility that man cannot lose this kind of union with God anymore, but does not *know* it. This is the reason why she speaks about doubt on the part of the human subject and the great care man has to take if he is to keep this union, at least in as much as it depends upon him. I suppose the reason is the full intellectual insight into the essence of God does not actually last. I also come to the conclusion drawn from Teresa's text that this kind of uncertainty is lacking during the actual experience. Therefore, during the actual insight into the essence of God, man is certain that he cannot sin anymore.

This leads us to another aspect of the question and it is one that was mentioned in the previous chapter, too. This is the question of man's own freedom or liberty, and the question of the final end respectively.

84 'Pues vengamos ahora a tratar del divino y espiritual matrimonio, aunque esta gran merced no debe cumplirse con perfección mientras vivimos pues si nos apartásemos de Dios, se perdería este tan gran bien.' M 7,2,1.

85 'Parece que quiero decir que llegando el alma a hacerla Dios esta merced, está segura de su salvación y de tornar a caer. No digo tal, y en cuantas partes tratare de esta manera, que parece está el alma en seguridad, se entienda mientras la divina Majestad la tuviere así de su mano y ella no le ofendiere. Al menos sé cierto que, aunque se ve en este estado y le ha durado años, que no se tiene por segura, sino que anda con mucho más temor que antes en guardarse de cualquier pequeña ofensa de Dios y con tan grandes deseos de servirle como se dirá adelante.' M 7,2,9. [Emphasis mine.]

Aquinas shows us that the nature of the human will is such that it follows the good known by the intellect and necessarily follows only the perfect good, which is God, providing man has gained the knowledge that God is such a perfect good. Further, I have shown that with respect to the necessity to follow the perfect good, there is no sense in asking about freedom, since it is only the fulfilment of one's nature and Aquinas says that that which is related to our nature is not counted under the realm of freedom. As man cannot change his own nature and become something other than man, neither can he change the nature of his own will. Therefore, necessarily following absolute good is neither a free act nor a non-free act, but a natural one.

The crucial point is the necessity to know God to be such an absolute Good. But in this state of life, we cannot gain the knowledge of God as the absolute good in such a way that would exclude all possible doubts: this would be so overwhelming that man had no other choice but to will God. Hence, in the imperfection of our intellection there also lies the possibility of our own freedom, the possibility to reject God.

However, in the realm of the supernatural, the situation changes significantly. For naturally imperfect knowledge is gradually perfected by the divine help resulting in nothing less than an unmediated, direct insight into the very nature of God. Teresa's description does not leave any room for doubt or to doubt that this insight communicates perfect knowledge, since it enables man to gain the knowledge of the divine simplicity and oneness of the divine attributes which is obscured to the analogical knowledge of God. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask whether man loses his freedom then, whether he can sin any more or whether he has to follow God as the supreme good necessarily.

In this respect, the texts of St Teresa provided above are crucial since she undoubtedly rules out the possibility that man could not sin anymore, that man would be, by the mystical marriage, deprived of the possibility to turn himself from God. Or at least she thinks that man does not think of himself to be sure of his own salvation.

This uncertainty is preserved, as I believe, by the transience of the experience of direct insight. Since this direct insight is not actually preserved all the time, but only given once in a while, there is room for personal doubt and therefore also for at least the theoretical possibility that man could turn himself from God. And in this possibility, man's freedom is preserved since he is not actually necessitated to want only God as his only and supreme good all the time.

However, it is also necessary to say that Teresa herself cannot imagine that someone who has reached this state would want or wish to do anything like turning away from God. This is also (but not only) seen in the given example. Teresa stresses that the soul reaching the state of the mystical marriage is very careful not to lose it and allows for personal doubt. However, she also indirectly admits the possibility that the soul cannot really turn from God but only thinks so. My conviction is that this is given by the permanence of the state of the mystical marriage on the ontological level and by the transience thereof on the epistemological level. Therefore, I conclude that unless the supernatural intellectual knowledge is perfected in terms not only of quality but also of temporality, the union with God is not a perfect one and the human person is not necessitated to will and follow only God.

At this point it is finally possible to formulate the answer to the question which stands in focus: is the mystical marriage a pre-mortem beatific vision in the body or is it not? The answer, however, is two-fold. In the strong sense, it is not, for the simple reason that it does not last and still preserves at least the theoretical possibility to sin and doubt one's salvation. The beatific vision, on the other hand, is a permanent state which is promised to man to be preserved even after the general resurrection. After that, the beatific vision will be enabled in the body. Further, the beatific vision by its very nature excludes even the theoretical possibility to sin.

On the other hand, in a weaker sense, the mystical marriage is a pre-mortem beatific vision in the body. This conclusion, however, needs explanation. First, it is important to hold the distinction of the ontological and epistemological levels. Concerning the epistemological level, I am

convinced that Teresa's description of the knowledge gained in this state is an immediate insight into the very essence of God and, therefore, this experience is identical to the kind of intellectual insight man will be given in the beatific vision *when it is actual*. However, this experience does not last and regresses back to potentiality which might be, God willing, actualised once again in this life or in the life to come. Meanwhile, man is dependent on the natural ways of intellection.

Further, there is the level of the being of the soul. Teresa comes to the conclusion that on this level the mystical marriage lasts. Mystical marriage is the highest possible union between the soul and God. Aquinas ascribes the possibility of such a union to charity (since charity is what will last into the afterlife). Now, it follows that the mystical marriage is the highest possible degree of union in charity between the soul and God. This common charity is, then, what lasts in the life to come, what carries the soul, so to say, from this life to the next, from this imperfectly realised beatific vision to the perfectly realised beatific vision in the life to come. So, just as the infused gifts of faith, hope and charity enable a person to participate in the essence of God, so also, on a higher level and perhaps more explicit level, the mystical marriage is, on the level of the being of the soul, the beatific vision in a weaker sense realised through charity. Charity is closely related to the will. The will in the beatific vision finds and reaches its final end and that is why Aquinas speaks about the will's repose finding its expression in delight and peace. Such peace and delight is, however, something of which Teresa speaks already in the mystical marriage. There is, nevertheless, one limiting factor. Teresa reserves the lasting of peace and delight only to the highest part of man's soul, to the 'spirit'.

And there lies the third difference between the mystical marriage and the beatific vision: in the beatific vision, the intellect and the will are joined together in a common act of beatific vision since they are no longer directed to different objects but to a single object – God – who is the Truth to which the intellect adheres and at the same time the Good towards which the will adheres. However, in the mystical marriage their acts are still separated but for brief occasions when the intellect is given a direct glimpse into the essence of God. Therefore, the mystical marriage is not a full beatific vision in the body but 'only' a participation therein, which is the most perfect attainable in this life and in itself still imperfect.

7.5.1. CHANGE BROUGHT BY THE MYSTICAL MARRIAGE

It might seem that this is everything there is to say about the mystical marriage, but it is not. The seventh dwelling place bears strongly trinitarian features. However interesting this topic would be – the indwelling of the Trinity within the heart of man and man's participation in the life of the Trinity and in the trinitarian relations, it is necessary to leave out this topic as it is frankly a theological theme beyond the scope of my thesis. There is a question which is of a more (although not exclusively) philosophical nature which I would like to treat for I believe it is still possible to uncover some deeper meaning. It is a question of the nature of the change which happens by reaching the state of the mystical marriage. I have demonstrated with several citations from various parts of the seventh dwelling place that Teresa deems this transition from the spiritual betrothal into the spiritual marriage to be a significant change. However, it is clear that the change cannot be a substantial one, since man then would become something other than man. Therefore, the change must be an accidental one.

But is it an accidental change attached to the essence of the human soul as such or is it an accidental change related to another accident? In an attempt to find the answer, I have considered several things. First, the mystical marriage is not reached all of a sudden but can be possible only after a significant and prolonged process, characterised by the three stages of the spiritual life. Second, if it is given, it is not given to anyone and it is not given randomly. Third, it is determined by the life from the sacraments together with the life of prayer and fostering of the virtues. Fourth, K. O'Reilly and J. Maritain, etc., understand mystical knowledge in terms of divine gifts, namely

the gift of the wisdom, faith and charity. But the gift of faith is a preliminary and necessary condition allowing man to be joined to Christ in baptism. Baptism is, further, the necessary condition for the reception of the sacraments and the spiritual development as Teresa represents it. Baptism, being an indelible sign of belonging to Christ, joining the soul to Christ forever, is itself some kind of accidental ontological change.

Now, if the mystical marriage is brought about by the process which build upon the sacraments, prayer and virtue enabling man to receive mystical knowledge mediated by the gifts of the Holy spirit, then we should understand the mystical marriage as a state enabled and determined by the sacrament of baptism, since it is baptism that opens up the spiritual treasures to the soul. Since baptism itself can already be understood as an accidental ontological change, it follows that any other change on the level of the being of the soul should be understood in terms of the first and necessary ontological change caused by the baptism.

Hence, the mystical marriage should be understood as an accidental change of an accident (baptism). But it seems that it is possible to extend the argument even further. Baptism imprints an indelible sign into the soul, the sign of belonging to Christ for ever. But the mystical marriage is a state characterised by Teresa as so close a union with Christ that it, in many features, resembles even the beatific vision. She expresses this union in allusions to human marriage,⁸⁶ since she is convinced that the state of the mystical marriage will never be taken from the soul unless some really grave offence is committed and in one breath expresses the conviction that the soul is in no way interested in committing any such grave sin.

In other words, I think it possible to understand the mystical marriage as belonging to Christ for ever and at the same time of the belonging of Christ to the soul for ever. But, the sign of belonging to Christ forever was already given to the soul in baptism. We can see that the effect of baptism and the effect of the mystical marriage are at least partly the same (i.e., belonging to Christ for ever). There seems to be some intimate connection between both and yet experience teaches us that man does not become a mystic just by the reception of baptism. And there is another matter: the mystical marriage does not signify only man's belonging to Christ for ever, but also of Christ's belonging to man for ever. This particular feature does not seem to be reflected in baptism, though. So, there is some common trait between baptism and the mystical marriage and some uncommon one.

To tackle this problem, I wish to separate it into smaller portions. First, I would like to concentrate on the similarity between baptism and the mystical marriage, and consequently to deal with the question of why a newly baptised does not immediately become a mystic. Second, I would like to deal with the dissimilarity, namely on the feature of Christ belonging to the soul.

Both baptism and the mystical marriage are formally related to the same object, that is, union with Christ. However, the latter is determined by the former, therefore representing some kind of derivative from the first. K. O'Reilly, when dealing with the question of mystical knowledge and the necessity for man's reason to be divinised by the necessary help of the Grace of God, cites St Thomas: 'Faith is ordained to things to be hoped for, being, as it were, a beginning, in which the whole is, as it were, virtually contained, as conclusion in principles.'⁸⁷ But the faith is a necessary condition for the reception not only of the mystical knowledge but also of baptism. Hence, it is possible to use the same trait of the argument. Just as the final beatitude is already virtually contained in the life of faith, as the conclusion is virtually contained in the principle, so also is the mystical marriage virtually contained in the baptism.

R. Garrigou-Lagrangé has repeatedly argued throughout his *Three Ages of Spiritual Life* that

86 It should be noted that the human marriage she is alluding to is understood strictly in terms of the sacramental, indissoluble marriage between one man and one woman. To read into the symbolism any of the contemporary discussions on the possible understanding of marriage in different (and broader) terms would be a serious mistake rooted in anachronism.

87 K. O'Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Willing and Loving*, pp. 190–193. Citation from Aquinas, see Super Heb. c. XI, l. 1 [557].

the mystical life is not anything extra-ordinary but, on the contrary, it is to be understood as an ordinary development of the spiritual life. St Teresa would agree, although the entrance into the mystical stage and its fulfilment in the mystical marriage is always dependent on the free divine gifts. At this point, I would like to add that not only does the mystical life represent an ordinary development of man's spiritual life, but it is already, although virtually, contained in baptism itself, including even the peak of the mystical marriage. Thus, the mystical marriage can be understood as a full realisation of something which was already received virtually in the baptism.

Or perhaps the situation is yet more complex. Let us rather formulate the previous statement in a more cautious way. Let us say that the element of self-giving to God in an act of love is already present, although perhaps virtually to a certain degree, in baptism; baptism is the sign of belonging to Christ for ever, hence it is a sign of self-giving to Christ. So, why does man not become a mystic immediately upon receiving the baptism?

We have seen that the necessary condition of receiving the gift of the spiritual marriage is the full abandonment of one's own will. However, this self-abandonment often results in receiving mystical knowledge. I have argued in the previous chapters that the nature of mystical knowledge consists in a transformation of the way of knowing, without the necessity of sensual apprehension. But this means that the abandonment of the will goes hand in hand with the abandonment of one's own intellect in general, and intellection in particular. Thus, the whole question of the mystical marriage is crucially connected to our intellection, and in this point, as I believe, there lies the answer to the question why the mystical marriage is not given immediately in baptism. Further, there are two more features of the mystical marriage to be taken into account – the self-giving of Christ to man and the participation in the essence of God by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Regarding the first point I would like to return to Maritain. He argued that naturally, man cannot gain a knowledge of God other than analogous since man is not able, by the use of his natural reason, to grasp the very essence of God, the oneness of all the divine attributes. He also argued that this is reached in the beatific vision and also put mystical knowledge above the natural one. Teresa describes the mystical marriage as a state introduced by a special kind of mystical knowledge, different in its character from all of the previous ecstatic experiences, which in the description resembles the beatific vision to a high degree. Moreover, in the previous chapter, I have argued that the mystical experiences of the previous degrees of the spiritual life mediate a knowledge not dependent on sensual apprehension and natural reasoning in any way. I have also argued that this is made possible by man's consent to be acted upon, by man's giving God a free hand over his own soul and being.

Now, it follows that God cannot give himself completely to the soul which had not given itself completely to him for the simple reason that man is through his natural way of knowledge not able to apprehend God as he is, in his essence, and God cannot give man the necessary supernatural help of his divine gifts, if the soul did not let him to do so. At least, he cannot do it if he wishes to preserve man's freedom. *Mutatis mutandis*, if man gives God a free hand to operate within his own soul, then God is free to give a man the supernatural intellection that can ultimately lead to man's apprehending God as he is, to have an insight into God's own essence. In giving man this kind of knowledge, God effectively gives himself completely.

This brings us back to the second point mentioned above and related to the question of baptism, or rather the question of why man is not given the 'mystical marriage' *realiter* at the moment of baptism, but only *virtualiter*. I think that if man was able to abandon himself completely, his will and intellect including, it might be the case. But people are generally baptised either shortly after birth, and thus before reaching the age of reason, or in adulthood. Those baptised in adulthood can, however, find it more difficult to realise fully what the sacraments are and are often unable to realise that self-abandonment means the complete renunciation of their will and the intellect and intellection, and therefore are not able to make such a perfect act of self-abandonment, hence the

mystical marriage is not given. However, it is already virtually present until they are prepared, or some feature of the mystical marriage is present there.

At this point I would like to turn to the second feature of the mystical marriage, namely the self-giving of God to man, which is not reflected or signed in the sacrament of baptism. Baptism is a sign of giving one's self to God, not of God giving himself to man. But the mystical marriage is an expression of mutual self-giving and love for each other. Thus, the mystical marriage is not solely an expression of the love and desire of man for his God but also of love and desire of God for man. If man gives himself completely (although virtually) to God in the sacrament of baptism, then why does God not give himself to man, too? The reason might simply be the grandeur of the Almighty. Teresa refers to God as 'His Majesty' or 'King of Kings', always exalting (and rightly so) God's supremacy. Following her train of thought, it would be unfitting for the king to give himself completely to his own vassals unless they had given themselves first. And yet, God has sent his Only Begotten Son, letting him be crucified so that many could be saved for eternal life. Therefore, it is not completely unthinkable that God would bring a soul to such an exalted state even before the soul had given itself completely. Thankfully, we do not recognise only one sacrament, but more. The question therefore is whether there is a sacrament which would be a sign of Divine love for man. The answer is simple: the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a sign of divine love towards man and his self-abandonment to man. Baptism opens the way to the reception of the Eucharist, or in this circumstance it is possible to say that baptism is a sign of a gift of self to God which enables God to give himself to man – body and soul, godhead and humanity – fully. Therefore, in the Eucharist we find the second feature of the mystical marriage, which is 'absent' in the sacrament of baptism.

The third question is the question of participation in the divine essence. In the previous parts I have marked that many authors see the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the respective virtues to be already a means through which man participates in the divine essence. At that point I needed to show that the knowledge gained in the mystical marriage differs from the knowledge of God gained through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Yet, at this point a reference to this participatory function of the gifts of the Holy Spirit serves a different purpose. In the current circumstances, I wish to concentrate on the 'participation'. The mystical marriage has been shown to be a participation in the divine essence and the future beatific vision. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are also said to be a participation in the divine essence. But there is a sacrament closely related to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and that is the sacrament of confirmation.

Now, I have argued that the self-abandonment of man to God realised fully in the mystical marriage is present (virtually) in the baptism. The self-abandonment of God to man reached in the mystical marriage is already present in the Eucharist (fully, for there is no lack in the knowledge of God and, therefore, when he gives himself he knows what he is doing, he does not hold anything back). Now the participation in the divine essence reached in the mystical marriage is present in the sacrament of confirmation. Therefore, I conclude, that the fully realised, actualised, mystical marriage is virtually present in the sacraments of initiation, which are the sacraments of initiation of man into the divine life.

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ABSTRACT

This work is divided into two major parts. The first is an interpretation of the works of St Teresa of Avila based on the principles of modern hermeneutics. This interpretation shows that her teaching is more complex and consistent throughout her corpus than is usually accepted and that her teaching on the soul and the spiritual life follows a general pattern of three stages of the spiritual life. It also shows that Teresa's teaching gains a new dimension and complexity if we try to grasp her meaning through Aquinas's thought, and the parallels between the two doctors of the Church are presented. This part can be considered as a case study of the renowned mystic.

In the second part, proceeding from the interpretational one, more general, philosophical questions are considered regarding the nature of the mystical life, especially about the role of the will and intellect in the mystical stage of the spiritual life, mystical knowledge, and the mystical marriage. This work is novel in its interpretation of Teresa's teaching and its highlighting of the common traits between her and Aquinas.

KEY WORDS

Teresa of Avila – Thomas Aquinas – Spiritual life – Mystical Knowledge – Mystical Marriage
Intellect – Will

ABSTRAKT

Tato práce je rozdělena na dvě velké části. V první z nich předkládám interpretaci stěžejních děl sv. Terezie z Ávily, která vychází z principů moderní hermeneutiky. Tato interpretace představuje učení sv. Terezie jako učení, které je napříč korpusem jejích děl komplexnější a konzistentnější, než se obecně má za to. Dále ukazuje, že její nauka o duši a duchovním životě sleduje obecný vzorec třech stupňů duchovního života a její učení získá netušené rozměry a hloubku, jestliže její texty čteme prismatem teologicko-filosofického myšlení Tomáše Akvinského. Práce zároveň poukazuje na paralely mezi oběma učiteli církve. Tuto část lze považovat za jakousi případovou studii významné mystičky.

Na tuto interpretační část úzce navazuje část druhá, v níž si kladu obecnější otázky filosofického řádu. Ptám se v ní po povaze mystického života, zejm. po roli intelektu a vůle v této fázi duchovního vývoje; po povaze mystického poznání (vědění) a mystického manželství. Originalita práce se ukazuje jak v neotřelé interpretaci Tereziiných textů, tak v představení paralel a styčných bodů mezi učením obou postav.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Terezie z Ávily – Tomáš Avinský – duchovní život – mystické poznání – mystické manželství – intelekt – vůle