

John of St. Thomas and François Annat

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João Poinset (1589–1644) was a Dominican theologian of the commentator school, born in Lisbon of an Austrian father and a Portuguese mother, and briefly confessor to Philip IV of Spain. He was known as John of St. Thomas, Joannes a Sancto Thoma, though writers today refer to him as “Poinset.” As Royal Confessor, he used his political influence at the Court of Madrid in favour of Louvain against the papal bull *In eminenti*¹ which he believed was defective and based on false information. Poinset protected the Doctors² of the Faculty of Theology³ who were secular clergy, some of whom held a traditional Augustinian theology. His letter to John Schinckels (1581–1646)⁴ and the other Professors of the Faculty was written May 14, 1644,⁵ as a response to their *Memorial* in which they stated their case. Poinset thought that the *Augustinus* of Cornelius Jansen was as a whole unfairly judged, even if part of it might be erroneous. He also believed the King of Spain had the right to make a better judgment pending clarification and that it was his duty to help the Pope make a deeper study of the issue. Therefore Poinset advised the Court to withhold the *placet*⁶ in this doctrinal matter. He died soon thereafter on June 17, 1644. This was still during the earliest phase before the pejorative name “Jansenist” had permanently stuck.⁷ A royal *placet* was required to promulgate papal bulls in the Spanish possessions, and it was delayed until years after Poinset's death, partly due to his initial efforts.⁸ The perception was that he tried to checkmate the Jesuits and their nascent Antijansenism in Belgium,⁹ even though works by Jesuits, such as their *Theses*¹⁰ published in Antwerp in 1641 as a response to the *Augustinus* of 1640, were equally condemned by *In eminenti*. For their part, the Jesuits distorted the intent of *In eminenti* and used it as a global condemnation of the Augustinians, which was only partly the case since they themselves were also condemned. The truth was that this and a pontifical decree of August 1, 1641, insisted on silence for both parties.¹⁰ The irony was that

Poinsot, who was so devoted to St. Thomas, protected Augustinians on the political level when on the intellectual level they were sometimes rather fiercely anti-Thomist and anti-Scholastic in keeping with their emphasis on positive theology in the Renaissance.¹² Poinsot had a previous reputation for being the chief adversary of Francisco Suarez (1548-1617) and other so-called "Molinists" or *recentiores* in Spain and elsewhere in the Jesuit orbit.¹³ And in the first and second volumes of his *Cursus Theologicus*¹⁴ Poinsot had attacked the corporate Doctrine of the Society of Jesus.¹⁵ Even though by the papal decree of 1607 which concluded the *De Auxiliis* hearings, the Religious of one Order were not to negate the legitimate theology of the other, he had managed to attack the content of Jesuit teaching on grace either without technically violating the legislation, or using privilege to evade the Inquisition. If he obtained a dispensation to write, he did not boast of it, and outright violations of the official silence on grace were not unknown. In fact, the legislation had been renewed as late as 1625 by Urban VIII, and all *In eminenti* did was renew the renewal. The rivalry between the Bañezian "New Thomists" and the Jesuit theology of Molina, Suárez, and Bellarmine, as fixed by Father General Claudio Aquaviva in 1613,¹⁶ had been acrimonious in Spain and especially in Louvain since the previous century. It was nothing new, and most thought the events of 1640-1641 were reviving something seen before. But Poinsot published volume one of the *Cursus* in 1637 and volume two in 1643, the year before he resisted the efforts of the Nuncio to Spain,¹⁷ Giacomo Panzirolo,¹⁸ who wished *In eminenti* to be promulgated in the Spanish Netherlands.¹⁹ Alerted by the Belgian Jesuits in 1641, François Annat (1590-1670) had already collaborated with their work by his polemics with Antoine Arnauld in France.²⁰ Annat was the Rector of the Jesuit Community in Toulouse and a professor of theology who had made a reputation for himself thirteen years earlier by a major book against Guillaume Gibieuf (1583-1650). The year after Poinsot's death, in 1645, François Annat published a major theological work in Toulouse called the *Scientia Media*. The new book was really a set of responses to those who had already written against the *scientia media*. John of St. Thomas was one of the named adversaries. The others were William Twisse, a Protestant; Claude Tiphaine (1571-1641), a deceased Jesuit former Provincial who out of courtesy was addressed anonymously; and an unnamed Carmelite from Salamanca.²¹ Guillaume Gibieuf the protégé of Pierre de Bérulle, and a Scottish Catholic exile named William Chalmers, were also responded to in adversarial style in an appendix. All of them had ranged themselves

against the Doctrine of the Society of Jesus and the *scientia media*.

The doctrine of *scientia media* was a means of reconciling divine foreknowledge with human freedom. In the eyes of the Jesuits the Thomist-Augustinian position reduced the role of human freedom in order to preserve God's omnipotence with regard to salvation. *Mediative knowledge* stood between the necessary knowledge by which God knows everything which is independent of His free will, namely Himself and His ideas, and the *scientia libera* by which God knows everything which depends upon His free will, that is everything besides Himself. The Thomist position denied that there was any such special divine knowledge. According to the Thomists there is no *mediative* divine knowledge antecedent to the decrees of the divine will. The Thomists saw *scientia media* as limiting divine omnipotence. Their view was that God from all eternity decreed what would happen to free creatures and the realization of these divine decrees occurs through a *premotio physica* which moves creatures from within to the actions intended by God but always in a manner suitable to the nature of the creatures, that is, unfree creatures to act with necessity, free creatures to act with freedom. Divine causality must include three points: the initial production of the universe, the conservation of all things in existence, and *the actual exercise of causality by all secondary causes*. Rational beings, such as people and angels, are "free secondary causes" in this system.

The book *Scientia Media* by Annat was immediately censured by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Toulouse, with Antonin Réginald, OP, leading the charge. The Faculty of that university was a Thomist stronghold at the time. The French Royal Chancellor, Pierre Séguier, intervened with the Monarchy on behalf of the Jesuits, and the case was referred to the Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome. Perhaps this also implied it was Spanish anti-Romanism in the first place which had forced Annat to reply to John of St. Thomas and a Salamanca Carmelite when they wrote on topics that were banned. But the judgment from the Roman censor of books did not take long. In 1646 the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition, which had no legal or binding force in France due to the Gallican regulations, exonerated Annat of any doctrinal error or disciplinary irregularity.²² The Inquisition even said that not to respond to Poinsoot and the others would have been tantamount to an admission of surrender. Silence in this age of aggressive polemics was interpreted in that way. Only in 1656 was Annat's book *Scientia Media* finally freed of this university censure, the same year the University of Toulouse accepted *Cum occasione* and the condemnation of the Five

Propositions that were alleged, but not proven, to be in the *Augustinus* of Jansenius. The *Scientia Media* was revised and republished in 1662, then reprinted in the 1666 collection of theological works which appeared in Paris the year of Annat's fiftieth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. This collection was called the *Opuscula theologica ad gratiam spectantia in tres digesta tomos*.²³ Historians who have looked for a 1646 second edition have yet to find it. The only change the Holy Office had required was that the cover page be altered so the adversaries did not appear as equals since one of them was a Protestant.

Annat became the French Jesuit Royal Confessor in 1654, nine years after the censure of the *Scientia Media* by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Toulouse. Therefore he outlived the Spanish Dominican Royal Confessor, and indeed Annat's refutation of Poinset was posthumous. Annat himself died twenty-six years after Poinset. To us it looks to be a typical Molinist of the era refuting a rigorous "New Thomist" commentator who had come along after Trent and who was squaring the text of Thomas with Tridentine concerns. Moreover, grace and predestination as conceived then have yielded ground to another approach. As Margaret Harper McCarthy pointed out in her dissertation, "Recent Developments in the Theology of Predestination,"²⁴ there has been a turn in theology. A different starting point for conceptualizing this problem was developed in our century—the great authors begin with grace, not the Fall.

Nonetheless, Poinset has seen a revival. Jacques Maritain contributed the principal impetus to this revival with his 1940 address in Lisbon pointing to the importance of Poinset's thought. Since then, John Deely has edited some of the philosophical works of Poinset, and has written extensively on his theory of communication or semiotics.²⁵ Deely makes the point that Poinset is capable of addressing postmodern thought. However, Poinset's theology of grace seems to have attracted no such attention.

For Annat, by contrast, there are only historical inquiries. In 1965 Henri de Lubac produced his *Augustinisme et la théologie moderne*.²⁶ In this work Annat is treated, not in passing, but still not as the main focus. In 1974 and 1975 there were two articles by Lucien Ceysens: "François Annat, SJ, et la condamnation des cinq propositions à Rome (1649–1652)"²⁷ and "François Annat, SJ, avant son confessorat (1590–1654)."²⁸ Ceysens highlighted the importance of Annat for understanding Antijansenism, and he dealt with him and the historical Society of Jesus very unsympathetically.

Someone once said that the seventeenth century was the forgotten century, especially in terms of Catholic ecclesiastical history. Yet between the Council of Trent and the Enlightenment it can be claimed that Jansenism-Antijansenism was the most important struggle within the Catholic Church. It involved Dominicans and Jesuits, Scotists and Augustinians, bishops and pastors, nobles and the *haute bourgeoisie*, professors and students, kings and their confessors. The connection between Poinsoot and Annat, though they probably never met, is a point of insertion into an immensely complex historical situation. When Poinsoot died in 1644 the battle was just warming up.

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- 1 ACDF, St. St. 0–2–b, [Index Librorum qui in hoc Volumine continentur editorum occasione impressionis libri Apologia de Casuistis] The heading reads:
“Constitutio Urbani PP. VIII emanata pridie nonas Martii 1643 quod confirmatur Constitutio Pii Papae V et Gregori XIII prohibentium quasdam theologorum sententias, et opiniones. Nec non prohibitio libri cui titulus *Augustinus* Cornelii Jansenii alius libri impressi occasione operis Jansenium. S.mi D.N. D. Urbani Divina Providentia Papae VIII. Confirmatio Constitutionum Pii Papae V. et Gregorii XIII. prohibentium quasdam Theologorum sententias, et opiniones. Necnon prohibitio libri, cui titulus, *Augustinus*, Cornelii Jansenii, olim, Iprensium Episcopi, excusi Lovanii, Typis Iacobi Zezeri, anno 1640, aliorumque operum, ac libellorum, occasione dicti libri, variis in locis, et variis idiomatibus, impressorum, Romae, Ex Typographia Rev. Cam. Apostolicae MDCXXXIV. Urbanus Episcopus Servus servorum Dei Ad perpetuam rei memoriam. In Eminentis Ecclesiae militantis Sede.”
- 2 Cornelius Jansen [1585–1638], by this point the Bishop of Ieper; Henri van Caelen [1583–1653], and Libert Froidmont [1587–1653], to name three.
- 3 As a Dominican trained at Louvain he would not have attended the Faculty of Theology of the University of Louvain, but only the Dominican Studium. See Leonard Boyle, “Providence: Studies in Western Civilization,” 2, no.3 (Spring 1994): 19.
- 4 Schinckels was an ardent Antijansenist and one of the most senior Doctors, named in 1614. He was Dean of the Faculty of Theology for part of 1643 and a Regius Professor after that. See Lucien Ceysens, *Sources relatives aux débuts du Jansénisme et de l’Antijansénisme, 1640–1643* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires and Bibliothèque de l’Université, 1957), Introduction, I–lii. For Annat’s thoughts on

- Schinckels, see *OTGS*, vol.3, *Informatio de Quinque Propositiones*, "Preface", 328–329.
- 5 Ibid., 638–640.
 - 6 It was called the *Regium placet* or *Exequatur*.
 - 7 See Léopold Willaert, *Les origines du Jansénisme dans les Pays-Bas catholiques* (Gembloux: J Duculot, 1948), 25, n. 4. Annat asked and answered the question if "Jansenist" were a false name.
 - 8 See Léopold Willaert, "Le placet royal et le Jansénisme dans les Pays-Bas catholiques," *Nuove Ricerche Storiche sul Giansenismo* (Rome: The Gregorian University Press, 1953).
 - 9 Hence the remark of John Deely, "Jansen graduates from Louvain during Poinso's second year of graduate study there (thirty-seven years later, in 1644, against the urging of the Apostolic Nuncio, Poinso will use the Spanish Crown to protect the Louvain faculty from the papal bull *In eminenti* issued the previous year in condemnation of Jansen's work)..." See John Deely "A Morning and Evening Star: Editor's Introduction," *ACPQ* 68.3 (Summer 1994): 263.
 - 10 [BJB 2169].
 - 11 [BJB 2170].
 - 12 The uncompromising and principled nephew of St. Cyran, Martin de Barcos, studied under Jansenius in Louvain and had a contempt for Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastics in general. He harked back to the Primitive Church as the ideal. See E.D. James, *Pierre Nicole*, 11 and passim.
 - 13 For the Society of Jesus, Suárez was considered the premier expositor of Thomas's thought up to the Thomistic revival of the nineteenth century when his reliability was questioned. See John Deely, "What Happened to Philosophy between Aquinas and Descartes," *The Thomist* 58 (October 1994): 555.
 - 14 See Joannis a S. Thoma, *Cursus Theologicus, nova editio*, vols. 1 and 2 (Paris: Ludovicus Vivès, 1883). It claims to be faithful to the 1663 Lyon edition. The Solesmes version is newer.
 - 15 Ibid., vol.2, Disp. 20, art. 1, para. 26. Of special interest is para 14, "Origo, Progressusque *Scientiae Mediae*."
 - 16 Claudio Aquaviva's "Decretum de uniformitate doctrinae, praesertim de gratiae efficacitate" even appeared as §964 in the first nine editions of Denzinger's *Enchiridion symbolorum et definitionum*. See Xavier-Marie Le Bachelet, *Prédestination et Grâce Efficace: controverses dans la Compagnie de Jésus au temps d'Aquaviva 1610–1613*. 2 vols. (Louvain: Museum Lessianum, 1931), vol.2, 239, n. 2.
 - 17 The authenticity of the bull was questioned by the Nuncio to France, Grimaldi, and he confided this to the Archbishop of Sens. See Gres-Gayer, *Le Jansénisme en Sorbonne*, 24, n. 4.
 - 18 Later Secretary of State (1647–1650).
 - 19 See Lucien Ceysens, *La première Bulle contre Jansénius, sources relatives à son histoire* (1644–1653), vol. 1 (1644–1649) (Rome and Brussels: Institut historique belge de Rome, 1961), Introduction xi, xxiv-

xxv, 294–295.

- 20 See François Annat, *Le libelle intitulé: Théologie morale des jésuites, contredit et convainçu en tous ses chefs, par un Père théologien de la Compagnie de Jésus*. 3^e édition (Paris: chez Henault, 1644; Cahors, 1648). [BJB 2297].
- 21 Speculation is that it was Philip of the Holy Trinity (1603–1671).
- 22 "Censura Tolosana" [Franciscus Annatus], in ACDF, *Censor Librorum* 1641–1654, File #13, 16 May 1646.
- 23 Paris: S. Cramoisy et S. Mabre-Cramoisy, 1666. 3 vols.[BJB 2318].
- 24 Margaret Harper McCarthy, "Recent Developments in the Theology of Predestination." S.T.D. diss., The Lateran University, 1994. Unpublished.
- 25 See for example Deely's "The Semiotic of John Poinset: Yesterday and Tomorrow," *Semiotica* 69. 1/2 (April 1988): 31–127.
- 26 Lyon: Aubier, 1965.
- 27 *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 44 (1974): 111–126. Reprinted in *Jansenistica Minora*, vol.12.
- 28 *Antonianum* 50 (1975): 483–529. Reprinted in *Jansenistica Minora*, vol.13

The Aesthetic: James Joyce and Wittgenstein

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Any reader of Joyce's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* with the slightest interest in beauty, the arts and literature must remember the conversation between Stephen Dedalus and the fatuous fathead, Lynch, on aesthetics, with special reference to the definition of beauty by St Thomas Aquinas. In this short piece I shall compare Stephen's interpretation of Aquinas's definition and succinct analysis with some notes on the aesthetic from Wittgenstein's *Notebooks 1914–1916*.

Aquinas's definition - *Pulchra sunt quae visa placent* - defies elegant direct translation. Literally it means 'Those things are