

Divine Use of Exemplars to Support Student Essay Skills

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The University of Edinburgh School of Divinity have been working with its first and second year students to develop critical analysis and skills associated with essay writing, supported by running workshops and using exemplar essays to provide a mechanism for feed forward and assessment for learning.

Dr. Nick Adams a Senior Lecturer in Theology and Philosophy has championed this initiative, running workshop-based classes for 1st and 2nd year students. Dr. Adams captured feedback from over 60 students, who were unanimous in finding the sessions invaluable.

Dr. Adams noted: “A few students thought the sessions were too long and could have been better compressed. That sounds right. For students for whom this is a bit new, more time is needed. Students who are familiar with essay-writing need much less.”

The Process

The process involved running 4 essay classes. Students were provided with exemplar essays, a copy of the Essay Classification Marking Scheme and two marking sheets for grading student essays. Students were given a week to grade the two essays. The exemplars were discussed during the essay classes the following week. Feedback was taken from students at the end of the 4 classes.

The exemplars are used to orient tutors and explain a particular course manager's desiderata for essays. They are used to help students understand the mark scheme we use, and to become familiar with the way mark sheets are used to feed back positive and constructive comments to students. The process aims to encourage reflection on the grading criteria, and to enable students to tell the difference between a good and weaker essay, with the discussion being focused on concrete observations, rather than abstract principles alone. Annotated version of the faux essay (shown in the Appendix) are used to help illustrate specific points, but don't detract from the more open student discussion in advance. Overwhelmingly positive feedback was taken as encouragement to further develop this work.

Ongoing Work

Next year, Dr. Adams plans two courses that will have this work built into the curriculum, and will include:

- (a) précis of text
- (b) summary of argument
- (c) correct use of scholarly apparatus
- (d) presenting rival argument
- (e) structuring by topic/argument (not by source)
- (f) use of exemplars
- (g) practice marking (by students)

It has been serendipitous that this work has coincided with a wider University initiative to participate in a HEA sponsored project 'Transforming Assessment Practice' (TAP) which has helped provide a framework for institutional and sector

wide sharing of this and similar good practice. This means the TAP project will inform future good practice.

Appendix – The Exemplars

Time-Travel in Aquinas 1

Student Number: 5#17570244

This essay will investigate the role of time travel in the theology of Thomas Aquinas. It will focus on the discussion of double temporality in the *quarta pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. The principal argument advanced here is that the Angelic Doctor develops a defensible argument that the future causes the present. It will also be suggested that this argument is the source for more contemporary theological investigations, such as those of Pfannkuchen and Dr Zeus.

The final part of the *Summa Theologiae* appears to have puzzled theologians for centuries. Unlike the earlier parts, on theology, on ethics and on Christ, and which proceed through a series of *quaestiones* starting at question 1, the fourth part starts with question 104 and proceeds backwards to number 1. The reason for this organisation is never given in the text. It has been suggested that Aquinas' last words, 'Burn my toast!' were a reference to some kind of countdown.¹ It has also been claimed that the idiosyncratic numerical structure is evidence that Aquinas was not the author, and that his contribution to the text as we now have it ended with the final question of the section on Christ.²

The most common interpretation is that because Aquinas' account of creaturely time posits the simultaneity of the past, present and future, the numbering was intended to emphasise the point.³ I propose to leave questions of authorial intention to one side, and explore a more radical possibility. Question 42, the most obscure part of the fourth part, contains the notorious discussion of 'double temporality'. I will show that Aquinas investigates the possibility that the

This is an excellent introductory paragraph. It states, briefly and elegantly, the topic, the source to be investigated, and the primary argument to be advanced. It also identifies a secondary argument, and makes it clear that is secondary.

This claim is true (it has puzzled theologians) but no evidence is offered for the claim. It needs to be supported.

This is very good: the main difference between this text and the others is clearly identified.

This is very good: two different observations are drawn from the literature and brought together.

This is excellent: it identifies a claim made in more than one source and produces a compound footnote with two sources. This is much better than making the same point twice with two footnotes. It shows excellent structure.

This is very good: having identified the portion of text to be investigated, the argument is briefly sketched in advance.

This is excellent structure: three sources converge on a point and

¹ Corgi 2012, p.93

² Rik 2001, pp.56-107

³ Guinness 1953, p.205; Ferrari 1992, pp. 36, 49, 67, 103.

future precedes the past, and may even cause it.

It is commonplace to observe that the discussion of temporality in part four is indebted to Augustine's account of time in *Confessions* XI.⁴ Augustine's focus on questions of memory is taken up in Aquinas' concern with the ways in which past, present and future happen together.⁵ Since the ground-breaking work of Craftylove in the early years of the twentieth century, common-sense obstacles to accepting this idea have seemed far less severe.⁶ Wolfy has argued persuasively that *Time's Tentacles* had a much greater impact on later theological thought than theological engagements with Einstein's theory of relativity.⁷ This is supported by arguments made by Comedones, who suggests that modern theology is shaped more fundamentally by fiction than by scientific writing, although it is debatable whether the influence of films is as strong as she claims.⁸

The question of simultaneity presents relatively few problems for interpretation. They do not adequately take account of the following passage, however:

We speak of the future in two ways, as succession and as heavenly. '[W]hereas ours both come and go, that they all may come' [Augustine *Confessions*, XI] shows succession. 'The hour is coming and now is' [John 4:23] displays the heavenly. What is yet to come is already. That which may be makes the present. (*ST IV q.42 a.2*)

Aquinas strikingly juxtaposes Augustine's *Confessions* and the Gospel of John. The context of Augustine's claim is a contrast between God's eternity, and the fact that time does not pass for God, and human temporality, and the unavoidable mortality that this brings in our earthly lives. The context of Jesus' saying in John's Gospel is Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, and concerns the true worship of the Father regardless of whether

are grouped elegantly together in one footnote.

This is very good: it makes a critical judgement about the significance of one contribution in the literature. This is then supported with reference to a secondary source...

...and then a further source, together with a brief critical remark at the end. The latter is good, although the point made is not supported by anything.

This identifies clearly and briefly where the focus lies, and why: very good.

This is the first long quotation in the essay, and it is correctly formatted: the paragraph is indented without quotation marks.

This is excellent: it offers brief commentary on the primary text, elegantly identifying its content and context. It is exemplary in its conciseness.

This is superb: the previous para explained the facts. This para analyses more deeply the shape and concerns of the text.

This is exemplary: an educated guess is made, and is clearly expressed as such.

This too is exemplary: it identifies

⁴ Craftylove 1907, p.3; Weber 1965, p.44; Lash 1999, p.254

⁵ See especially Lash 1999, pp.255-60

⁶ Craftylove 1907, *passim* but esp. pp.40-66

⁷ Wolfy 2013, p.143

⁸ Comedones 1989, pp.32-9

one is on a mountain or in Jerusalem.

Aquinas is concerned less with these contexts of discussion than with a taxonomy of philosophical forms of speech. He distinguishes 'succession' and the 'heavenly'. By succession **he presumably means** that this follows that, and this is supported, drawing on the most authoritative theological source, by the most emphatic example: each of our days follows the last until we die. **What Aquinas means by the 'heavenly' is rather more obscure.** Perhaps he means the way that God's time breaks into the present. Perhaps he means to draw attention to certain features of the prophetic voice, here that of Jesus: it invokes a future in ways that bring it to pass. Aquinas clarifies it in the pithy phrase 'What is yet to come is already'. **We might render it,** 'the future is present'.

The more perplexing question concerns what is meant by the second phrase: 'That which may be makes the present'. Part of the problem is one of translation. The Latin '*Tum quae nunc facit*' might be more literally rendered 'then which makes now'. One can quibble with the license of the translators of the Aquinas Institute in their rendering of '*tum*' as 'that which may be'. Our concern here, however, is with a word that is not difficult to translate at all: '*facit*' (makes). **The broader question concerns** what role this second phrase plays in Aquinas' discussion. The quotation from John is quite adequately explained in the first phrase: 'what is yet to come is already'. Why, then, is there a need for a further phrase? It seems not to offer further clarification but to introduce further, and radical, obscurity. Then *makes* now.

The distinctive idea in the second phrase is the verb 'makes'. In the Johannine quotation there is a simultaneity of future and present: what was anticipated is already visible and taking effect. Aquinas goes beyond this in an extraordinary way. The future is not merely simultaneous to the present. The future makes the present. **There is not just equivalence but causation, not just equality but priority.**

In a work that is almost universally dismissed as nonsense, Rik argues that the only parts of the *Summa Theologiae* written by Aquinas are the first three parts, and that the final

a problem of difficulty for the interpreter, and then has a go at resolving it.

This is evidence of excellent thinking: a phrase is recast in a more familiar idiom.

This whole paragraph is outstanding: it identifies a problem and then sets out methodically to solve it, including an impressive discussion of Latin translation.

Excellent: a wider interpretive question now arises as a consequence of solving a translation question, which is brought clearly into focus.

This is a beautiful paragraph: it identifies the main issue and then describes it elegantly and succinctly.

This last sentence is stylish: not essential for an essay, but it establishes that the writer is skilled.

This shows excellent structure, as a strategy to solve the problem is begun.

This may be true, but it is irrelevant information that does not serve the main argument. It is indulgent and should have been deleted.

Excellent: an apparently non-respectable source is to be used imaginatively, although not in the

part was written by aliens and produced by automatic writing of the kind described in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The New Revelation* (published the year following his Sherlock Holmes collection *His Last Bow*).⁹ Because the thesis is preposterous, it is rarely cited in scholarly literature on Aquinas, let alone treated with any seriousness. This may be a mistake, however. One does not have to accept the claims about aliens and automatic writing to notice some persuasive patterns of argumentation, under the surface as it were. If one is not distracted by the long (and disappointingly boring) descriptions of alien abduction, one sees some cogent reasoning and surprisingly persuasive claims, supported by references to Aquinas' text.

I suggest that one approach Rik's *Aliens Wrote the Summa* less like Festinger's *When Prophecy Fails* and more like Jenkins' *Of Flying Saucers*.¹⁰ Where Festinger focuses on the predictions made by flying saucer cults and their failure to materialise, Jenkins suggests it is more fruitful to consider the kinds of reasoning in play, and look at the everyday kinds of social relations that are embodied in such groups. In the case of Rik's book, one can fruitfully focus not on the conspiracy-theoretical claims themselves, but on the kinds of reasoning used to support them.

Rik claims that the aliens who abducted Aquinas, and whose brain-washing led to Aquinas' writing part four of the *Summa* in a trance, were time-travellers. He claims that they took Aquinas to the future (for some reason, not explained by Rik, this was New York City in 1979) and, at Aquinas' own request, to the site the garden of Gethsemane, at the time of Jesus' betrayal. Aquinas is described (in a sketch more reminiscent of Mark's than John's Gospel) staying awake praying in the dead of night while the disciples slept.¹¹ (It is interesting that Rik does not have the aliens transport Aquinas to the time of the crucifixion. The choice of Gethsamane surely says something about Rik's spirituality, which Aquinas might not have dismissed.)

Rik argues that Aquinas travelled in time and

way its author intended.

Outstanding: a methodological justification is offered for taking the text in this unusual fashion. Precedent is offered for this way of reading. The approach to be followed is elegantly and concisely laid out.

This is a sophisticated claim indicating a deep grasp of the intellectual issues at stake.

This next part is exposition of the source: it is kept brief and to the point: very good.

This aside is a bit risky (as asides generally are): it does not bear on the main question. But in this case it seems to work ok: if in doubt, however, it is better to delete material that might be judged irrelevant.

This is a rather long quotation: again a bit risky, as it takes precious space away from your own argumentation. But it is clearly central to the point made, and thus is justified.

This paragraph explains why the

⁹ Rik 2001, referring to Conan Doyle 1918

¹⁰ Festinger 1956; Jenkins 2013

¹¹ Rik 2001, p.88 and p.115

that this explains his obscure utterances about the past and the future. It was because he had seen Manhattan, its urban sprawl, its metropolitan cacophony, that he attributed causation to the future:

St Thomas witnessed the sin of The Big Apple. He saw its loneliness, its inequality, its spite. It was for New York that the angelic doctor would pray in Gethsemane. It would be for the sins of New Yorkers that our Lord would die, in St Thomas' late theology. Their wickedness caused the crucifixion.¹²

We should not focus on the surface of this account, but on its deeper logic. Rik suggests that for Aquinas the future (in New York) causes the past (in Jerusalem). This does much better justice to the '*Tum quae nunc facit*' than many more scholarly works, which tend to ignore or downplay it in favour of the clearer and more manageable Johannine trope about the simultaneity of the future and the present. Rik is surely right to want to grapple with the obscurer formulation and to try to find some kind of explanation for it. His explanation may be absurd; but the desire to attempt some kind of explanation is surely one that any reader should share.

What might it mean for the future to cause the past? Why should this idea be taken seriously? After all, it appears to contradict common sense. We see versions of this insight, and perhaps the influence of Aquinas' so-called 'double temporality', in later theology. I would argue that the work of Pfannkuchen and Doctor Zeus displays this most clearly.

Pfannkuchen is heavily influenced by Hegel's *Science of Logic* whereas Dr Zeus is a children's author who writes rhyming stories explaining the Arian controversy. They are not often considered together. They share an interest in temporality, however, and advance views that are strikingly similar. Pfannkuchen (following Ernst Bloch) says explicitly that in anticipating God's future, we change what is possible in the present. There is a causality between future and present. Indeed, by anticipating the wrong future, one not given to us by God, we create alternative,

long quotation is needed: some sophisticated interpretation is being undertaken.

Impressive grasp of some deep intellectual issues.

This paragraph is ok but is a bit of a disappointment after the previous one. First, it asks two questions which are left hanging rather than answered. Second, its structural task is to make a transition to more contemporary material. It does this, but rather abruptly.

Very good: the two sources are introduced and described. Not excellent, though: the sources are dealt with rather briefly without much commentary. They are given 'as is' to the reader. That's fine, and the connection with the other material is very good, but it's a bit basic.

Bit risky and informal – but it is amusing enough (without trying to be too funny) to work. If in doubt, leave it out.

This is obviously a very unusual source to introduce into an essay of this kind. Really imaginative. But it would be even better to show some awareness that this is not a source like the others. But very good that it is played with a straight face. The temptation to

¹² Rik 2001, p.90

dark possibilities in the present.¹³ Doctor Zeus' classic children's book *One God, Three God, Now God, Then God* (with its eye-watering diagrams of the Trinity – a kind of 'M.C. Escher meets C.S. Lewis') offers an interesting expression of the way in which God's future relates to our present that bears a family resemblance to Pfannkuchen:

The Days-To-Come
Are not quite here.
Think about them
And they appear.

They tell you things
You never knew.
They even show you
What to do.

Today is made
By Days-To-Come.
I don't know how.
Go ask your mum.¹⁴

Aquinas' insistence on 'then which makes now' finds contemporary expression in ways that have strong political and ethical implications. If the future causes the past by transforming our imaginations, including children's imaginations, by establishing anticipated and yet unanticipated possibilities, then we do not live in a world of certainties in which we are helpless observers. Instead we are agents, drawn into a new future by God's grace, empowered by a vision that is not ours when it encounters us, but which changes what we take ourselves to be capable of in the present. The future truly causes the present, not by some kind of reverse mechanism, but by the denial of mechanism itself. Like the unchained man in Plato's cave in *Republic* we are shown up to the surface of the future and are freed to imagine – and build – a different society.

In conclusion, Aquinas' account of double temporality is not merely defensible: it is inspiring. Calling to mind a more famous time-traveller in contemporary TV drama I suggest that we name Thomas Aquinas not 'Doctor Angelicus' but 'Doctor Quisnam'.

be facetious is strong, and quite properly resisted.

Outstanding: all the threads are nicely taken up and the implications are spelled out clearly and succinctly. The written style is also impressive and displays a care with words.

An impressive display of wider learning. Could be better phrased: 'Like the unchained man released from the cave in Plato's Republic...'

A bit risky and rather pretentiously 'clever', with its translation of 'Doctor Who' into Latin. But academic writing often displays this character and in this case it works well. If in doubt, however, leave it out.

¹³ Pfannkuchen 1985, pp.176-194

¹⁴ Dr Zeus 1960, p.6 I am grateful to Rachel Muers for introducing me to the work of Dr Zeus.

Bibliography

- Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* (Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012)
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- Queen Zone Corgi *How the Middle Ages Were Obama's Fault* (Washington, DC: Lobo Tomes, 2012)
- P.H. Craftylove *Time's Tentacles* (High Wycombe: Sands University Press, 1907)
- Merkel I Lash *Mystical Portals in Medieval Theology* (**Hammer Prize for Literature**, Berlin: Saturn Bargain Press, 1999)
- Solomon Ferrari *Theology Through Lists* (Cambridge: CUP, 1953)
- Leon Festinger *When Prophecy Fails* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1956)
- Olivia Guinness *Theology for Cats* (North-North-West Bend: Hunchback Press, 1995)
- Timothy Jenkins *Of Flying Saucers and Social Scientists: A Re-Reading of When Prophecy Fails and of Cognitive Dissonance* (London: Palgrave Pivot, 2013)
- Alasdair Maclagan *Mine All Mine: The Ecclesial Burden in Modern Theology* (Lake Superior: Fabulous Books, 2009)**
- Lupusflatus Pfannkuchen *Future Precedes Past* (tr. W.A. Dullard, Eisenach: Plätteverlag, 1985)
- Dilip K Rik *Aliens Wrote the Summa* (Conspiracy, TX: OMG Press, 2001)
- Johannes Weber *Oversystematic Theology* (Dun Barthing: OCD Press, 1965)
- T. Shirt Wolfy *Popcorn Theology: Knowing Pop References That Are So Last Thursday* (The Moon: Thoroughly D Press, 2013)
- Dr Zeus *One God, Three God, Now God, Then God* (ed. R Muers, New Amsterdam: Totally Random Tomes, 1960)

The bibliography is complete: every text mentioned in a footnote appears here. But there is a stray text – by Maclagan – that appears in the bibliography but is nowhere mentioned or cited in the main text. It should be deleted. Also the fact that the Lash text won the Hammer Prize is irrelevant: this information should be deleted.

Time-Travel in Aquinas 2

The Concept of Time in the *Summa Theologiae*

Student Number: 5#17570244

<p>Thomas Aquinas wrote <i>Summa Theologiae</i>, a work of theology. It is a long book, discussing many different ideas, but it was written during the Middle Ages before there was science, and a lot of it's ideas are outdated. Aquinas believed that the present and the future happened at the same time, we know today that the present comes first, and the future happens later.</p> <p>Aquinas says "We speak of the future in two ways, as succession and as heavenly. '[W]hereas ours both come and go, that they all may come' [Augustine <i>Confessions</i>, XI] shows succession. 'The hour is coming and now is' [John 4:23] displays the heavenly. What is yet to come is already. That which may be makes the present." (ST IV q.42 a.2)</p> <p>The numbers in <i>Summa Theologiae</i> count down backwards, and this is number 42, where Aquinas discusses time. The numbers are a countdown, although Aquinas may not have written it. His last words were 'Burn my toast!', which means they had toast in the Middle Ages. I</p>	<p>Poor introduction. It is uninformative and opinionated; the main problem is its failure to say what the essay will be about.</p> <p><i>Summa Theologiae</i> should be in italics</p> <p>its (no apostrophe)</p> <p>Comma should be a semi-colon</p> <p>Second half of the para suggests that a major theologian didn't understand time. Untrue.</p> <p>Long quotation must be indented without quotation marks.</p> <p>The bare citation of a primary work shows the student has read something, which is good. But the reader has no idea why this passage (rather than some other) has been cited.</p> <p>The essay already appears to have poor structure. No argument has been advertised.</p> <p>This paragraph contains a series of claims. They may be true but there is no rationale for rehearsing them, nor are any of them supported by references.</p> <p>Comma after 'Middle Ages' should be a full stop. The inference that there</p>
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like toast myself.

Craftylove says “Time is not the linear affair that it is required to be in the Newtonian system”.¹⁵

He also says “Even in Kant’s ‘transcendental aesthetic’, where time is taken as a function of the organisation of perceptions in the thinking subject, it is still presented in a wholly linear fashion and can be plotted though a series of points, albeit now in the mind of the observer rather than out there in the world”¹⁶ Craftylove agrees with Aquinas. He says “As long ago as the late 1300s, Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, grasped a radically alternative conception of temporality, as evidenced in his claim – ignored for hundreds of years – that ‘what is yet to come is already’”.¹⁷ Craftylove agrees with Aquinas, he does not understand modern science either, it shows this is not true. You could not fly a rocket to the Moon if the present happens at the same time at the future. You would arrive there at the same time as you set off, which is impossible.

Although it would be cheaper in terms of fuel, which is very expensive.

Aquinas was influenced by another theologian Saint Augustine. They were both saints because

was toast in the middle ages is sound but irrelevant.

Information about personal preferences is likewise irrelevant.

This paragraph appears to be the student’s notes cut and pasted: no rationale; structurally unsound. The footnotes are not properly constructed: they dither between identifying by date or by title.

Long quotation must be indented.

The paragraph is just a series of seemingly unconnected claims.

The quotations are long (and therefore should be indented) but they also take up precious space in the essay without strengthening it.

This sentence is strewn with commas; one should be a full stop and the other a colon.

The example of a rocket shows that the student is illustrating an argument, which is good. But because the student assumes there can be only one kind of discussion of time, the illustration is irrelevant to the discussion of Aquinas. The whole point of the essay is that a non-Newtonian account of time is in view.

Incomplete sentences beginning with ‘although’ should only be used for effect. Inference about the fuel cost is sound but irrelevant, as is the remark about the general cost of fuel.

Unsupported claim. There should be a colon after ‘theologian’.

The sainthood of the theologians is irrelevant; the explanation of

¹⁵ Craftylove 1907
¹⁶ Craftylove Time’s Tentacles, p.3
¹⁷ Craftylove 1970, p.3

they were holy. Augustine said "And yet, Lord, we perceive intervals of times, and compare them, and say, some are shorter, and others longer. We measure also, how much longer or shorter this time is than that; and we answer, "This is double, or treble; and that, but once, or only just so much as that." But we measure times as they are passing, by perceiving them; but past, which now are not, or the future, which are not yet, who can measure? unless a man shall presume to say, that can be measured, which is not. When then time is passing, it may be perceived and measured; but when it is past, it cannot, because it is not."¹⁸ Weber thinks this is because Augustine was an authority for Aquinas when writing his theology. Augustine says that intervals of time can be shorter or longer, he is right. He understands modern science much better than Aquinas. If you were building a rocket to go to the moon, Augustine would be a better theologian.

The numbers counting down in *Summa Theologiae* emphasises the point Aquinas was trying to make about time, even though he was unscientific about time. He was talking about double temporality, which is a very confusing

sainthood is uninformative.

Long quotations must be indented.

The rationale for the quotation is not given. It takes up precious space without advancing the argument or supporting a previous argument.

It is not clear why Weber is relevant.

Anachronism: Augustine was writing long before the advent of modern science (as was Aquinas).

Confused sentence: the task of building a rocket and the evaluation of Augustine as a theologian are wholly independent of each other.

Uninformative: it is not clear what argument is being attempted.

Anachronism: Aquinas was in no position to be 'scientific' in our sense.

Uninformative: in what ways is double temporality confusing? Are there explanations of it?

The primary task is to explain the numbering, and this gets confused by the attempt to evaluate the thinking

¹⁸ Weber 1965, on page.44

idea. It is the idea that the past, the present, and the future all happen at the same time, **which is wrong.** That is why the numbers count down backwards in Aquinas' book.

Guinness says "Feline ethics are alien to us. Perceptions of time, of cause and effect, are central to human ethical thinking. Aristotle's account of the virtues is unthinkable without the emphasis on development of our capacities, a development which requires a nexus of exemplar, imitation and above all the possibility of learning through repetition and pedagogical feedback. Cats too learn through imitation, but their temporality is wholly other. There is a dream world of discernment, framed in an eternity of the now, a simultaneity of present and future reminiscent of Aquinas' discussion of double temporality." (Guinness 1953, p.205)

Guinness thinks that if cats had a favourite theologian it would be Aquinas. If a cat was on a rocket to the moon **it might think twice about that,** however. **France planned to launch** Felix the astronaut cat into space on October 18, 1963, but Felix escaped so they chose another cat, Félicette. The cat had electrodes implanted into her head to measure neural impulses. Félicette was recovered alive, but, due to an accident, the

behind it.

Long quotations must be indented. Poor structure: no transition to this next topic. Rationale for quotation not given: seems not to advance the argument or support a previous argument.

Takes up precious space for no good reason.

Unsupported claim. Of questionable relevance.

Too informal

Irrelevant

Lifted from Wikipedia without attribution: serious plagiarism

Non-sequitur. The meaning of 'alien' in the Guinness quotation is quite different from 'alien' in the Rik book.

Again, poor transition, with no

next cat in space was not. The final French animal launches were of two monkeys in March 1967.

Another writer who talks about aliens is Rik. Rik says "St Thomas witnessed the sin of The Big Apple. He saw its loneliness, its inequality, its spite. It was for New York that the angelic doctor would pray in Gethsemane. It would be for the sins of New Yorkers that our Lord would die, in St Thomas' late theology. Their wickedness caused the crucifixion."¹⁹ For Rik, aliens abducted Aquinas from Paris while he was eating dinner, which he did very often because he was fat. He was colossally fat, suffered from edema (dropsy), and one huge eye dwarfed his other. Nor was he a particularly dynamic, charismatic figure. Introspective and silent most of the time, when he did speak, it was often completely unrelated to the conversation. His classmates in college called him "the dumb ox." Today, recognized as the greatest theologian of the Middle Ages, he is called "the doctor of angels."

When the aliens abducted Aquinas they took him into space, but they also took him to the future. Thomas was very sad when he saw what life was

rationale for the quotation.

Irrelevant to the argument.

Unattributed internet source: serious plagiarism

This whole paragraph is irrelevant.

Unclear whose claim this is: yours or Rik's?

Oversimplified account: pure exposition of Rik without reference to any argument or point.

A great deal of true but irrelevant information (e.g. the 30 pieces of silver).

¹⁹ Rik 2001, p.90

like in New York. He thought people were very mean to each other and did not show Christian compassion. He prayed for them in the Garden of Gethsemane, which was where Jesus was arrested by Roman soldiers after Judas betrayed him for 30 pieces of silver. The aliens took Aquinas back in time to Gethsemane where he prayed. The disciples were in the garden too, but they were sleeping because they were tired. They had also just eaten a big meal, which can make people tired.

Aquinas wrote that “What is yet to come is already. That which may be makes the present”. He said this because he had travelled in time, to the future and then to the past. He did not know about time travel and it must have been very confusing for him, because he was medieval. It is no wonder that he thought that everything happens at the same time. The big irony is that the aliens must have understood modern science in order to build a time-travelling spaceship in the first place.

Some scholars have ignored the work of Rik, this is because it writes about abduction by aliens, and this is not normal in theology.

Some theologians think Aquinas is right when he

The reasons for the disciples' sleep is not relevant.

Confused paragraph consisting of a series of unsupported claims. The main claim – that Aquinas was confused because of the age in which he lived – is unsupported opinion.

Misuse of 'irony'

Bald claim not serving any argument. Needs to specify which scholars.

Needs to specify which theologians.

Principal not principle

The quotation is clearly designed to support the claim about fiction and science. In fact the quotation is about the importance of engaging with literature, and does not support that claim.

The quotation should be blocked and indented without quotation marks.

The quotation is very long and eats up precious words without

says that the present and the future are simultaneous. The **principle** problem is they are more influenced by fiction than science. Comedones says “the shaping of the theological thought in modern times is badly misrepresented in standard theological curricula. Courses in theology often present a succession of doctrinal developments, or a sequence of major figures presented in chronological order. Students quickly gain the idea that there is progress in the history of ideas, in which a canon of great books is gradually extended from Augustine’s *Confessions* to Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*. Literature is badly under-represented in such curricula. It is possible to study theology without engaging with John Donne or George Herbert. Students are fed a diet of fillets from Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae* but are not introduced to Dante or the entire tradition of Renaissance art shaped by his visions of heaven and hell. Professors spend a couple of hours a week discussing Kierkegaard but because they know their students are prepared to do only two or three hours of reading in advance, they fear to insist on engagement with Dostoevsky’s great novels. Yet the development of twentieth century theology is unthinkable without the role of literature.

advancing the argument.

The last sentence should be omitted.

It does not show this: it makes a quite different point about curricula

From Dante to J.G. Ballard, it is the great authors who shape the theological imagination.

Theology is commentary on fiction as much as, and in some cases more than, it is a response to modern science. Why, then, are there countless courses on 'science and religion' but almost none on 'theology and literature'? **This brings us to the importance of film.**²⁰ **This shows** that theology is unscientific. If theologian's studied physics and chemistry, instead of reading books like the Bible, which are very out of date, they would understand things like time better. If theology is influenced by fiction rather than science then **it won't be true.**

Pfannkuchen is a professor in Munich, in Germany, where they also have theology. Germany has never sent a cat into space, although they did invent the motorcar. **German cars are expensive to repair** and insurance costs can be high too, especially for younger drivers.

He wrote a book with the title "Future Precedes Past" in 1985. **We can tell** from the title that Pfannkuchen is a theologian who is influenced by fiction rather than science. He is also influenced by Aquinas and Augustine, who were medieval. **He says** "Our present is not fixed. We

in the university.

Unsupported claim about the scope of truth.

Abrupt transition; no sense of how this new section serves the argument.

Irrelevant

Such things cannot be inferred from titles.

No rationale given for the quotation (which should be indented); not clear how it serves any argument.

The primary task is to explain the claim made by Pfannkuchen rather than immediately to evaluate it. No attempt made to explain it. Stupidity

²⁰ Comedones 1989, pp.33-34

are not mere observers peering out into a world of iron-clad determinations. We are participants in a universe of possibilities, our actions shaped more by imagination than by the mechanism of cause and effect. "Everybody lives in the future" (E Bloch) and the futures we imagine shape what is possible for us. The horizons of our action are future-oriented; our hopes are co-extensive with our anticipations. The present tense is an extended prolepsis."²¹ Pfannkuchen believes that the future causes the present. In other words, when I eat my breakfast I have already eaten my lunch. Modern science shows us that breakfast comes before lunch, however.

In conclusion, the concept of time in Aquinas is very complicated. Some theologians agree with Aquinas and say that the present and the future happen at the same time, they are simultaneous. This is a very persuasive idea and many books have been written about it, as I have shown. Richard Dawkins argues that religion is a bad idea that makes people do bad things, he is a scientist. If Aquinas did travel in time, that would give him a very different perspective on things. He would be a bit like Doctor Who.

is attributed to a major thinker without proper warrant.

Conclusion contradicts what precedes it. The claim that Aquinas is complicated is undermined by the repeated claims earlier that Aquinas is stupid because he is medieval.

The essay has repeatedly said that the idea is not at all persuasive.

Unclear structurally why Dawkins is suddenly introduced so late. Misuse of comma. His being a scientist is clearly meant to relate to the repeated refrain about the superiority of science over medieval thought, but it does not act as a support for the argument.

²¹ Pfannkuchen 1985, p.180

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Using assignment essays for assessment supports student learning better than the traditional examination system. It is considered that course-work assignment essays can lessen the extreme stress experienced by some students over the "sudden-death" end of semester examinations: If we insist that all students write about everything they have learned in their study courses at the same time and in the same place (e.g. in examinations), we are not giving all of our students equal opportunities. This is mainly because they are very effective in developing knowledge and writing skills for subject areas. Also, assignment essays can be less stressful than examinations as they allow students to show their understanding of content in less pressured circumstances. This essay will discuss the main positive and negative aspects of focusing on practise (1) instead of theory. Generally speaking, acquiring practical skills has become essential for every job seeker. Therefore, the majority of job interviewers require from their candidates some technical experience to cover a certain position. In addition to this, internships and traineeships play a crucial role in preparing recent graduates for working life. This essay discussed the main advantages and drawbacks of this statement. Whether practise plays a more vital role than theory or not, it is clear that they are both significant in modern life. 268 words.