IN WHAT SENSE IS GOD INFINITE?
A PROCESS PERSPECTIVE

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P ERHAPS THE MOST persistent objection classical
theists raise against the process theism espoused by
such thinkers as Alfred North Whitehead and Charles
Hartshorne is that it conceives God to be finite. This recurrent
charge is assumed to characterize their positions fairly and to
be a fatal hindrance to the entire enterprise. Many are deterred
thereby from investigating this comtemporary alternative any
further.

Cornelio Fabro speaks of Whitehead's "return to the finitistic
conception of God." [1] Insofar as this claim conceives his con-

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[1] *God in Exile,* trans. Arthur Gibson (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press,
1968), p. 804. Fabro is not ordinarily a careless thinker, and has shown himself
to be an eminent scholar of St. Thomas. Apparently he was the first to discover,
in 1939, even before Etienne Gilson, the dynamic character of *esse* in the com-
position of *esse* and essence in the finite being. (See Helen James John, S. N. D.,
" The Emergence of the Act of Existing in Recent Thomism," *International
Philosophical Quarterly* 2/4 (1962), 595-620, at 609.) Nevertheless he can close
his discussion of Whitehead's theism with the following quotation described as
an excerpt " from a Whitehead essay [which] brings out the Whiteheadian stand
with special poignancy " (p. 835):

> If you ask me what God is, I can only answer he is a being whose body
> is the whole world of nature, but that world conceived as actually possessing
> deity, and therefore he is not actual as existent but as an ideal, and only
> existent in so far as the tendency towards his distinctive character is
> existent in the actual world. God, you will say, is on this showing an ideal
> being, whose deity does not yet exist, but is the next quality due to emerge,
> and cannot therefore be known by us. He exists only in the striving of the
> world to realize his deity, and to help it as it were to the birth. Moreover,
> he is not a creator as in historical religions, but created.

Now these words sound suspiciously like Samuel Alexander's, and so they are.
Fabro quotes correctly from *Science and Religion* (New York: Charles Scribner's
Sons, 1931), p. 136. In Fabro's bibliography, p. 1189, this book is erroneously
ascribed to Whitehead, but it is a series of twelve radio talks given in Britain
during December 1930 by such men as Alexander, Julian Huxley, J. S. Haldane,

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cept of God to be exclusively, or even primarily finite, we think it is utterly unfounded. To be sure, Whitehead subjects the traditional notion as to how God is actually infinite to severe criticism, but this need not entail the finitude of God as the only alternative. On the contrary, we wish to show that only Whitehead's conception of God can be appropriately described as " the infinite actuality."

There is some initial historical plausibility in ascribing the notion of a " finite God " to Whitehead, for he can be seen as heir to the thinking of John Stuart Mill, William James, William Pepperell Montague, and Edgar S. Brightman, all of whom regard God in some sense as finite. In his posthumous work, *Three Essays on Religion* (1874), Mill was troubled by the existence of evil in the world, and suggested that we should conceive of a limited deity faced with the independent existence of matter and force. James opposed the block-universe of absolute idealism, and advocated an appropriate alternative that we " be frankly pluralistic and assume that the superhuman consciousness, however vast it may be, has itself external environment, and consequently is finite." We should " accept, along with the superhuman consciousness, the notion that it is not all-embracing, the notion, in other words, that there is a God, but that he is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once." [2] Brightman criticized the unlimited expansion of the concept of God into an all-inclusive being, and postulated a restricting element within God as The Given, the source of evil which God constantly seeks to overcome.[3]

Within process theism itself, Charles Hartshorne's position is somewhat problematic. In *Man's Vision of God* he holds

B. H. Streeter, Dean Inge (no editor given). Whitehead was not among them.

God in Exile is a mammouth book, and Fabro apparently got his notes mixed up. What is more interesting is that he should have felt no difficulty in ascribing Alexander's words to Whitehead, let alone as the epitomization of his thought.

[2] *A Pluralistic Universe* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909), pp. 309-312, quoted in Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 349.

[3] *The Problem of God* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930).

that " the notion of a purely finite or imperfect deity seems to
have all the weaknesses that overwhelmed primitive poly-
theism." [4] Later he warns that " those who think that the
modern experiments with a " finite " god have proved abortive
might take heed of the radical ambiguity of all such phrases." [5]
He conceives God to be both finite and infinite, the supreme
instance of both these categories. " The world memory is
sufficiently conscious fully to realize forevermore all past quali-
ties whatsoever. In this stupendous sense God is literally in-
finite," because the past world extends back infinitely in time
without beginning. This does not mean, however, that God
is " infinite in the self-contradictory sense of realizing deter-
minately all future (that is, partially undetermined) qualities
as well." [6] God is not thereby limited in his omniscience,
though, as if there were actual future contingents which God
somehow did not know. Rather, God is strictly omniscient as
knowing all present and past actualities as determinately actual,
and knowing all future possibilities as possible.

These conclusions are reiterated in his most recent study,
Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method.[7] He recognizes
that God's experience of an inexhaustible past " implies an ac-
tual infinity of past states. Finitism at this point I take to be
incorrect. This is, I admit, not an easy assumption to justify." [8]
Though he denies Whitehead's multiplicity of eternal objects or
definite atemporal forms in favor of an indeterminate qualita-
tive continuum,[9] he admits that " the infinity of whole numbers
must be included in the necessary aspect of deity," together
with other such abstract entities, in order to number these past

[4] *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism* (Chicago: Willett, Clark &
Company, 1941) p. 5.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

[7] La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1970.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

[9] I have documented this contrast further in *Two Process Philosophers: Harts-
horne's Encounter with Whitehead,* ed. Lewis S. Ford, (American Academy of
Religion: AAR Studies in Religion, Number Five, 1973), pp. 58-65.

states, for " God must eternally have been and be aware of an infinite number of already actualized entities." [10]

Nonetheless each momentary divine state must be finite, if God is to be the " self-surpassing surpasser of all." God is not the infinite actualization of all possibilities, but has determinate states, each of which in turn surpasses and includes its predecessors. Hartshorne defines the perfect individual being as that " than which no *other individual* being could *conceivably* be greater, but which *itself,* in another ' state,' could become greater." [11] Put in Whitehead's terms, this means that God is a linearly ordered series of individual divine occasions, each prehending or including the totality of its predecessors. If these divine occasions are conceived with strict analogy with ordinary actual occasions, they must be as finite and determinate as any others. Besides, if each divine occasion in turn surpasses its predecessor, presumably by adding novel experiences of the on-going world to what was already experienced in the past, that predecessor must be finite in order for such surpassing to have definite meaning. " God never has had, and never will have, to make an infinite addition to his own life [assuming with Hartshorne that spatial plurality is finite], but always a finite addition. Moreover, the infinity of prior states is not a mere infinity of mutually independent items; for the just preceding state will have included all earlier ones in its own unity. So in a sense God is combining finites, not an infinite and a finite. The numerical infinity of the previous multiplicity is entirely embraced in the aesthetic unity of an experience." [12] Thus while God at any one time experiences an infinity of past states, the divine experiencer is finite and can be surpassed. In part, this is the solution we must adopt if we are to resolve a particular problem in Whitehead's philosophy. On the one hand, " Every occasion of actuality is in its own nature finite;" [13]

[10] *Creative Synthesis*, p. 65f.

[11] *The Divine Relativity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 20.

[12] *Creative Synthesis*, p. 126.

[13] *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), p. 356 (hereafter cited as AI).

on the other hand, each actuality experiences every actuality in its past, and the number of these actualities must be infinite. For every actuality comes into being as the appropriation and integration of its causal antecedents. Every actuality requires causal antecedents, *ad infinitum*. Thus for present actualities to exist, there must be an infinite series of prior actualities. This requires that there be a finite experience capable of synthesizing an infinity of simple physical prehensions of discrete actualities.[14]

Hartshorne appeals to the " aesthetic unity of an experience," which we may understand in terms of the Whiteheadian category of transmutation. By this category the many simple physical feelings of individual actualities are felt as one single feeling, provided there is a common characteristic derivable from them all whereby the entire nexus can be felt.[15] In other words, the class is grasped as a whole by virtue of its common class characteristic, provided individual differences can be ignored. These differences fade away so that the many actualities may form a common uniform background from which particularly relevant actualities of the immediate past may stand forth with greater emphasis. Since those actualities felt as a nexus are not individually discriminated, but are felt only in terms of their common features, there may equally well be an infinite as a finite number of them. In either case they are felt as a particular expanse characterized by some common feature.

Unfortunately we cannot apply this category of transmutation to God, and thus resolve Hartshorne's problem. Transmutation requires the ignoring of individual differences, as one of the ways in which the past fades, whereby objectification involves elimination.[16] God's cherishing of the past within his

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[14] We cannot here appeal to a finite plurality of mediate actualities, each in turn synthesizing its own plurality of more remote actualities. If the intervening syntheses unify only what is finite, the end result, no matter how large, will always be finite. Somewhere along the line there must be a finite synthesis of an infinite input.

[15] See *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), pp. 382-89 (hereafter cited as PR).

[16] PR. p. 517.

living immediacy requires that he preserve its differences as well as its commonality. Instead of a few transmuted feelings of nexus whose infinite gradations are neglected, God must actively synthesize an infinity of individual differences. This, we submit, is impossible for a finite actuality to accomplish.

In Whitehead's philosophy, however, there is a systematic contrast between the many, finite, temporal actual occasions of the world and the one, infinite, nontemporal actual entity which is God.[17] As long as actualization begins with the " physical pole," as a determinate synthesis of the causal past, this temporal integration can be finite and temporal. In contrast, there can only be one synthesis of pure possibility which initiates from " mental pole: " " unfettered conceptual valuation, ' infinite ' in Spinoza's sense of that term, is only possible once in the universe." [18] Any other actuality will be influenced by its character, and thus cannot be absolutely unlimited. Instead of there being an infinite series of finite states of God, each synthesizing the infinity which has gone before, God is conceived as an infinite actuality capable of absorbing into his nontemporal unity whatever multiplicity temporally arises.

In what sense, then, is God conceived as both infinite and actual? On the one hand, we must recognize that Whitehead characteristically limits actualization to its determinate, physical instances as, for example, in his claim that " all actualization is finite " as " the exclusion of alternative possibility." [19] While " it belongs to the nature of physical experience that it is finite," he recognizes that " conceptual experience can be infinite." [20] On the other hand, although determinateness is ordinarily the essential mark of actuality [as excluding alternatives], it is not so for Whitehead. Instead, it is " decision " which " constitutes the very meaning of actuality. . . . 'Actuality ' is the decision amid ' potentiality.' It represents stubborn fact which

[17] This systematic contrast is explored in some detail in my " Whitehead's Categoreal Derivation of Divine Existence," *The Monist* 54/3 (July 1970), pp. 374-400.
[18] PR, p. 378.
[19] AI, p. 333.
[20] PR, p. 524.

cannot be evaded." [21] Then determinateness is not the mark of actuality *per se,* but the outcome of finite, temporal decision, in contrast to definiteness, which is the outcome of infinite, non-temporal decision. The contrast between " actuality " and " potentiality " is thus relativized, for what is actual in itself (the decision) belongs (as outcome) to the potentiality of that which succeeds it.[22] The many existent actualities furnish the potentiality for the actualization of the present occasion. Both the finite, determinate actualities of the past and the one infinite, definite actuality provide the world with potentiality, but infinite actuality in the guise of potentiality is simply possibility.[23]

We must recognize that the one primordial (i. e., nontemporal) envisagement of all eternal objects or timeless forms is at once an actual decision and the creation of possibility. Earlier Whitehead had described God as " the principle of limitation," apart from which " there might have been an indiscriminate modal pluralism." [24] Apart from God's decision, the sheer, unorganized timeless forms would be haphazardly related to one another, exhibiting all sorts of " possibilities " and " impossibilities." They require a cosmic ordering whereby metaphysical generalities are established, making the boundaries between what is possible and what is impossible. A possibility is not simply a sheer, atemporal quality. It is internally related to others forming a coherent world of possibility with its own metaphysical order. The primordial decision whereby possibility is created by demarcating it from impossibility is the infinite, nontemporal act whereby God creates himself. As the one infinite actuality, he is the ever-present source of possibility to the world.

[21] PR, p. 68.

[22] This is formally expressed in terms of the "principle of relativity," "that the potentiality for being an element is a real concrescence [or growing together] of many entities into one actuality, is the one general metaphysical character attaching to all entities, actual and non-actual." PR, p. 33.

[23] This relativization of actuality and potentiality, along with Whitehead's understanding of actuality in terms of decision, is admirably brought out in Richard Rorty's study, "Matter and Event," pp. 497-524 in *The Concept of Matter,* ed. Ernan McMullin (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963).

[24] *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 256.

Once the relative status of actuality and potentiality is recognized, so that the same entity can possess both modalities in different perspectives, we may conceive that which is infinitely actual in itself as the realm of definite possibility for others. For that which is clearly infinite is the realm of possibility with endless gradations and alternatives. This notion of "infinite actuality" is rarely considered. The notion Whitehead criticizes under this heading concerns the attempted conjunction of infinity with determinateness. For that which is determinate is by nature finite, exclusive of alternative. Infinite actuality cannot mean the determinate actualization of all possibilities, for some are evil, and some are incompatible with one another: if there are actually seven persons in this room now, there cannot be six or eight or fifteen. At best what is meant by infinite actuality is the inclusion of the best actualization of every ideal, and then no allowance is made for incompatibilities among these various ideals. For these may clash: for example, technological efficiency suggests measures at variance with ecological balance. "There is no totality which is the harmony of all perfections. Whatever is realized in any one occasion of experience necessarily excludes the unbounded welter of contrary possibilities. There are always 'others,' which might have been and are not." [25]

Leibniz's doctrine of compossibility is relevant here. This need not mean that God chooses the best of the compossibilities. God can entertain an infinitude of ideals, for "the conceptual entertainment of incompatibilities is possible, and so is their conceptual comparison." They just cannot be conjointly rendered determinate by a single being, even an infinite being. Rather, "we must conceive the Divine Eros as the active entertainment of all ideals, with the urge to their finite realization, each in its due season." [26] In the end only the world can provide the determinate realization of these ideals in a plurality of finite individual instances. They can be realized

[25] AI, p. 356.
[26] AI, p. 357.

successively, in temporal sequence, by diverse hands, but not all at once by a single actuality, no matter how infinite or powerful.

Because God cannot be the determinate actualization of all possibility, Whitehead can speak of him in terms of limitation. " The limitation of God is his goodness. . . . It is not true that God is in all respects infinite. If He were, He would be evil as well as good. Also this unlimited fusion of evil with good would mean mere nothingness. He is something decided and is thereby limited." [27] If he determinately actualized all possible situations, he would create evil as well as good, but evil always involves the self-actualization of a plurality of actualities, at cross-purposes with one another and thus in conflict.

In speaking of God's infinite self-creation, we revert to Spinoza's doctrine of *causa sui.* Like him, " agency involves both a power of act*ing* and the expression of that power in something enact*ed,* a doing and a deed, and in action *par excellence* that which is enacted is the exhaustive expression of the potency." [28] God cannot be infinitely powerful, yet only exercise a portion of that power in creating a finite world. He must exercise his complete potency in creation; otherwise this potency cannot be known to be infinite. " Spinoza's philosophical intention, therefore, is to derive all things from a primordial infinite power or indeterminate potency self-actualized in an infinite and exhaustively determinate eternal universe." [29] We agree insofar as an infinite being in creating itself must create an infinite world. The world of determinate actuality we dwell in, however, is a world of finitude. It will not do to pretend that it is really an infinite world which appears as finite to our limited perspective. Spinoza's mistake lay in identifying possibility and actuality, thus producing a causal determinism. In creating himself God creates the only world which can be truly

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[27] *Religion in the Making* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 153.
[28] H. F. Hallett, *Benedict de Spinoza* (University of London: The Athlone Press, 1957), p. 9. Italics his.
[29] *Ibid.*

infinite, which is the world of possibility, not the finite world of determinate actuality.

A corollary to Spinoza's argument is that only the finite can create itself as finite. Finite, determinate actuality is realized by temporal, limited occasions, not by God, and there is a vast plurality of such free determinations, thus promoting contingency with its risk of evil. If the infinite can only create that which is infinite, it must create possibility, to be determinately actualized in turn by a plurality of free, finite agents.

While God is thus conceived as the infinite actuality of inexhaustible possibility, the world may also be conceived as an infinite plurality of determinate individuals. Thus the contrast between the infinity of God and the finitude of the world seems to be lost. Are these two infinities on a par? Also, if an infinity of time has already elapsed, an ancient horror returns to haunt us: does not this mean that in due course we shall exhaust all possibilities, so that history must be conceived as the endless recurrence of the same?

Prior to the discoveries of Georg Cantor in transfinite arithmetic, such problems remained unsolved. Cantor was able to devise a way of counting infinite sets, however, by placing the individual members in one-one correlation with each other. Two infinite sets are thus equivalent if a method can be arranged whereby every member of one set is placed in one-one correlation with every member of the other set. It can be shown that there are just as many points in one side of a triangle as in the other, no matter how unequal the two sides might be, for a line intersecting a point in one side parallel to the base will uniquely specify a point of intersection in the other side, and vice versa. However, it turns out that it is possible to prove that the set of points on any line is not equivalent to the set of whole numbers. There are more points than integers, even though these are infinite. The denumerable infinity of integers cannot exhaust the dense continuity of the line.

Now particular, determinate, individual actualities share

with the integers the property of being discrete. Between any two of them there is a definite boundary of demarcation; this distinguishes the epochal character of atomic occasions from a continuity of endlessly overlapping events. Thus particular actualities can be put into a one-one correlation with the integers, and are denumerably infinite. Possibilities, however, form a continuum with infinite gradations and shadings among alternatives; they are continuously infinite. Thus, while there may be a denumerable infinity of actualizations, the continuous infinity of possibility can never be exhausted.

God is infinitely actual, yet he can be enriched by the temporal, determinate actualization of the present. An older logic would have regarded this as impossible: nothing can be added to that which is already infinite. Even Cantor's transfinite arithmetic cannot resolve this problem. Instead the comfortable wisdom of mathematics must be directly confronted and challenged. Mathematics is timeless, abstracting from the temporal, and therefore cannot appreciate the way in which the temporal and determinate can supplement the eternal and definite, no matter how infinite it may be. The determinate carves out but a fragment of the range of possibility, banishing all alternatives, but it endows this one definite form with a rich concreteness derived from the integration of all the causal past with (and by means of) this form. Since the determinate realization of all alternative possibilities at once is impossible, some of these are realized successively in time, and these in turn enrich the infinite eternality of possible forms. Though the (continuous) infinity of divine conceptuality has already absorbed a (denumerable) infinity of discrete actualities into its nontemporal unity, it stands prepared to receive still more. The infinity of past states of the universe does not preclude the addition of yet more, as long as there is a temporal advance concretely enriching the timelessness of mathematical contemplation.

Is the possibility within God actually infinite, or merely potentially infinite? This distinction, we submit, properly con-

cerns the realm of temporal application. As temporal creatures, *we* can never complete an infinite series, but we can be given a rule of addition or subdivision whereby no matter what situation we confront, we *can* always transcend it by a further repeated application of the rule. Such addition or subdivision is always actually finite, though potentially infinite. The nontemporal envisagement of all possibility lacks the temporal context within which this distinction is made, but if its infinity must be either actual or potential, we would say that it is actual. It is essential for a potential infinity that any actual summation of it be incomplete, completable only by repeated application of the rule. Yet "the unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects "[30] must be complete. Incompleteness presupposes a standard of completion, and the notion of something missing which, when added, would complete the whole. Such addition, however, implies temporality, for there must be a distinction between the incomplete whole present before, and the complete whole present after, such addition. Nothing can conceivably be added to a nontemporal whole. Thus, for example, the divine realm cannot lack any form of definiteness which may sometime be relevant to the ongoing course of the world, for then it would be finite, not infinite. Its nontemporal completeness must include an actual infinity of possibilities.

Nevertheless there is a meaning of the potential infinite which applies to God. Here we must distinguish between pure and real possibility. A pure possibility pertains to an isolated form of definiteness, considered nontemporally apart from any concrete realization in the temporal world. This same form of definiteness, when considered in relation to a given causal past as a possible way in which it could be integrated in actualization, constitutes a real possibility.[31] The domain of pure

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[30] PR, p. 46.

[31] In Whitehead's terms, an eternal object is ordinarily a pure possibility, while a proposition illustrated by that eternal object as its predicative pattern, having a past actual world for its logical subjects, is a real possibility. This distinction is explored further in my essay on "The Non-Temporality of Whitehead's God," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 13/3 (September, 1973), pp. 366-368.

possibility forms the object of the primordial envisagement, and is, as we have seen, actually finite. But for each actual situation arising out of the temporal world God correlates those pure forms of definiteness which are relevant to any further determinate realization. Thus God is the agency of real possibility in the world, supplying each nascent occasion with those real possibilities appropriate to its own actualization.

These real possibilities appear to be infinite, yet need not be so; it is enough if they include all relevant alternatives. It is not the case, however, that certain are necessarily relevant, such that God supplies all of these. Rather, God is the agency of relevance, whereby pure possibilities are rendered relevant and thereby inserted into the temporal flux as actualizable.[32] From our perspective, real possibilities gradually shade off from the most to the least relevant. From God's perspective, those which are relevant are graded in importance and value, but more could always be added, depending upon God's interest and concern, from his infinite storehouse of pure possibilities. While this can never be definitely ascertained, the number of real possibilities provided to a given emerging occasion may at any one time be finite, though potentially infinite.

Thus, while any determinate actuality must be finite, there is room for an infinite divine actuality as the envisagement of all possibility. God's envisagement of pure possibility is actually infinite, while his envisagement of real (temporally relevant) possibility is potentially infinite. Moreover, his experience of the world includes a denumerable infinity of prehended past occasions. In these senses Whitehead conceives of God as truly infinite. The only sense of infinity excluded is the self-contradictory notion of infinite determinateness.

LEWIS S. FORD

Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia

[32] See PR, pp. 46-48.

IN WHAT SENSE IS GOD INFINITE?
A THOMISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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PROCESS THEOLOGY SHARES with Thomism the endeavor to use the full resources of reason in seeking to clarify the being of God, a project that brings both into the domain of metaphysics. But there is a quite distinct metaphysics pursued in one and in the other, with the consequence that the one God who is sought has differing identities in each. The twentieth century work of Whitehead and the thirteenth century work of Aquinas represent massive refinements of, respectively, Plato's many gods subordinate to the Forms and Aristotle's one god as " Thought Thinking Thought," but the two continue to represent distinct lines of historical development. Whiteheadians, having secured God's involvement with the world on the basis of his dipolar nature, continue to address the problem of how such a God can be infinite in other than a relative sense. Contemporary Thomists, preferring to safeguard the " infinite qualitative difference," affirm God's infinity in absolute terms which preclude all finitude, but are still striving to make intelligible how there can be any genuine concern on God's part for a finite order toward which he bears no ontic receptivity.

Lewis S. Ford addresses the problem seriously in reading Whitehead's descriptive definition of God as " the nontemporal entity "[1] to mean that God is actually infinite in the sense that his " nontemporal completeness must include an actual infinity of possibilities." God is infinite, and actually so, in his envisagement of the entire range of *pure* possibilities that excludes only " the self-contradictory notion of infinite determinateness." The envisagement of *real* possibilities, by con-

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[1] Cf. *Process and Reality* (N. Y.: Macmillan, 1929) pp. 48, 63f., and 73.

trast, would allow to God only a potential infinity. Yet what is
here denied appears to be precisely what the thought of St.
Thomas ascribes to God as the Pure Act of " To Be." The
categories of explanation, at any rate, are mutually exclusive;
seemingly we are left with a genuine *aporia.* Is Ford's explana-
tion a radical alternative to that of Aquinas? Or is it an at-
tempt to address something left unsaid in the thought of the
latter? Are there any prospects here for something like Heideg-
ger's *Kehre,* i. e., a development within thought itself that
represents a change in direction, yet one latent in the move-
ment of earlier thought? The question remains—and it can
best be served at this point by a continued exploration of the
virtualities inherent in each thought system. What follows,
then, is less a rebuttal or repudiation of Ford's illuminating
endeavor than an engagement in the dialectic which the ques-
tion itself urges upon intelligence.

1. The Denial of " Concrete " Infinity

The dipolar God of process theism is at once finite and
infinite, the supreme instance of both categories. He is finite
insofar as his actuality is always such in some determinate
way—in fidelity to Whitehead's principle: " all actuation is
finite, as the exclusion of alternative possibility." [2] But is
it logically impossible to ascribe to God an infinity that is at
once actual and determinate? This is surely so, as long as
one remains in the realm of *essential* determination (whether
the essence be viewed specifically or individually does not
matter at this point). To be an oak tree is precisely not to be
an elm tree; to be this oak tree is exactly not to be that other
oak tree. But this is precisely the kind of determinateness
that Aquinas refuses to God in calling him the Pure Actuality
of Be-ing (the hyphenated form serving to draw attention to
the participial character of the term). God is not an essence
having being (existence) and so trimming the latter to the
modal determination and limitation of itself, thereby excluding

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[2] *Adventures of Ideas* (N. Y.: Macmillan, 1933) p. 333.

all other essential determinations. Rather, what answers to essence in his case is in fact the sheer act of " to be " (*esse*).[3] The Godhead then, in Thomas's thought, is not *a* being (*ens*), nor the sum total of what all the beings are or could possibly be (*esse commune*); God is rather " *supra ens* " and located " beyond substance." [4] Neither is Divinity " Being Itself " (as in Tillich's phrase) which is the abstract contentless Ground of the beings, a symbolizing of the unknown that lies beyond being; God is rather being in the sense of Subsisting Actuality (*Ipsum Esse Subsistens*). "To be " (*esse*), as such, is not essence but act. It is the mysterious dynamism at the heart of things that explains why there are beings rather than no beings at all. As " act " it bespeaks of itself only perfection, but act which can submit to limitation when, in the case of creatures, it functions as the act of essence. What comes to be in the latter instance is obviously not subsistent but sustained in the exercise of its " to be " by God as Subsistent Being. Clearly at issue here is the real distinction of essence (as form or content) and *esse* (as actuality or existence) in the finite realm. The affirmation of God as transcending all such distinction—as precisely an exception to the metaphysical principle rather than (as Whitehead prefers) its prime instantiation— is not an admission that God's being is contentless, however, but, on the contrary, the ascription to him of the very plenitude of all content.[5]

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[3] *S. Theol.*, I, q. 3, a. 4: " sua essentia igitur est suum esse; " also *De Ente et Essentia*, c. 5. Since human knowing is conceptual and the concept is the mind's grasp of what pertains to essence, man's question about God cannot avoid taking the form of asking " what is God? ".

[4] *Expositio super librum De causis*, Lib. unicus, Lectio 6: ". . . causa prima est supra ens inquantum est ipsum esse infinitum, ens autem dicitur id quod finite participat esse, et hoc est proportionatum intellectui nostro cuius objectum est quod quid est . . . unde illud solum est capabile ab intellectu nostro quod habet quidditatem participantem esse; sed Dei quidditas est ipsum esse, unde est supra intellectum."

[5] God " so to speak contains within himself the entire plenitude of being, not contracted to any generic or specific nature " (*De Spirit. Creat.*, q. unica, a. 1). Some interpreters of St. Thomas have extenuated his position that God is the pure act of " to be " to mean that God has no essence. A recent instance of

He is this actual plenitude nonetheless in a way that remains unknown and unknowable, i. e., though *affirmed* by way of concepts and from a perspective provided by man's concepts, he is not properly *represented* in any concept.[6] To admit there could be a concept of God is to admit that his essence is something other than the act of being (esse). Precisely because our judgments necessarily manifest a subject-predicate structure they cannot properly grasp a God whose being transcends what is isomorphic to that structure, namely the essence-existence distinction. Thus, God is what he is in a way that cannot be properly grasped in a concept because the latter expresses only a mode of being. This is not to deny, however, that after the affirmation of God in judgment the mind can present God to itself in an act of eidetic visualization. Burrell is correct in noting that " we must say—without knowing what we say—that ' God's very nature is to exist '."[7] God's being lies beyond essence, and indeed beyond existence in the sense of mere givenness or facticity (which is being as the most abstract rather than the most concrete of concepts). *Esse* is rather that actuality immanent within things whereby they are anything at all. Moreover, it is act in a unique and ultimate sense as that which gives actuality to all other acts, so that it is the perfection of all perfections[8]—a notion that Cornelio Fabro tries

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this can be found in William J. Hoye: *Actualitas Omnium Actuum* (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1975): " To say that God's essence is esse is tantamount to saying that God has no essence " (p. 29); God is here represented as " the *indeterminate* pure act of subsistent being " (p. 33—emphasis supplied). This, in effect, empties out the term " God " of any meaning and makes it impossible to even think of him. St. Thomas himself is aware of the temptation to think in this fashion: "Aliquis enim est sicut Deus cuius essentia est suum esse: et ideo inveniuntur aliqui philosophi dicentes quod Deus non habet quidditatem vel essentiam, quia essentia sua non est aliud quam esse suum " (*De Ente et Essentia*, c. 5).

[6] ". . . because, as we have said, the essence of God is to exist, and since this could not be the case with any created form no such form could represent the essence of God to the understanding " S. *Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 2,

[7] David Burrell, *Exercises in Religious Understanding* (U. of Notre Dame, 1974), p. 96.

[8] " Unde patet quod dico ' esse' est actualitas omnium actuum, et propter hoc est perfectio omnium perfectionum " (*De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9); " Ipsum

to convey in his phrase "intensive act." The determinateness
of God, far from being exclusive of other determinations, is
all-embracing in a unity transcendent to the rich diversity
of the finite. All that is excluded is what pertains not to beings
as such, but to their diminished or defective states, to being as
it suffers privation in its finite instances with such *sequelae* to
finitude as, e. g., evil. This is but to say: God is wholly infinite
and nowise finite.

By contrast with this there is a marked tendency in thought
of Whiteheadian inspiration to conceive being exclusively after
the fashion of essence, as expressing specificity, rather than
to conceive it as self-identical with existential act. At bottom,
this is a refusal of the real distinction that lies at the core of
Thomistic insight into finite reality. Whitehead is preserving
the potency-act relationship as basic but this he understands
concretely more as a form-matter structure than an essence-
existence one. Thus, he affirms the dipolar structure of every-
thing, including God: a mental pole that is abstract (in God,
the prehending of eternal objects) and a physical pole that
is concrete (in God, his partial realization, as an actual entity,
of such pure form).[9] On these grounds it is consistent for
Whitehead to say that God creates himself [10]—something un-

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esse est perfectissimum omnium: comparatur enim ad omnia ut actus. Nihil
enim habet actualitatem, nisi inquantum est: unde ipsum esse est actualitas
omnium rerum, et etiam ipsarum formarum " (*S. Theol.*, I, q. 4, a. 1, ad 3);
" Quod autem est in omnibus effectibus perfectissimum, est esse: quaelibet enim
natura vel forma perficitur per hoc quod est actu: et comparatur ad esse in actu
sicut potentia ad actum ipsum " (III *C. G.*, 66).

[9] Whitehead's Eternal Objects are cognate to Plato's Forms though, as in Aris-
totle, the forms are not actual outside matter but only in those entities which
are their " occasions." But Aristotle is as much a philosopher of essence as
is Plato; Aquinas's philosophy, by contrast, is one of being, and moreover
of being as act. A contributing factor in this innovation by Aquinas was an
Arabic misreading of Aristotle, attributable to religious (Islamic) preconceptions.

[10] Decision " constitutes the very meaning of actuality . . . (It is) . . . the
additional meaning imported by the word ' actual ' into the phrase ' actual
entity ' " ; *Process and Reality*, p. 68. Lewis Ford formulates this in the following
terms: " The primordial decision whereby possibility is created by demarcating
it from impossibility is the infinite, nontemporal act whereby God creates himself."

thinkable in the Thomistic schema, which views existence as the mystery *that* something is at all rather than the distinct phenomenon that it is in this or that determined way. As hopefully will be suggested below, Thomism can at least entertain the logical possibility of saying that God creates himself in this latter sense—the sense, that is, of God's decision determining the kind of God he chooses to be vis-a-vis mankind, but not in the sense of divine decision determining that there be a God rather than only the Void.

Here, perhaps, the irreducible difference between Aquinas and Whitehead comes most clearly to the fore, a difference that grounds the opposed conclusions concerning the sense in which God is said to be infinite. For Aquinas, God is the ultimately real to which nothing is prior ontologically or logically. For Whitehead, God and world are correlates; each is an actual entity subordinate to what lies beyond them both, namely Creativity as the category of the ultimate.[11] Only actual entities are fully real, but they are such as instantiations of a Creativity that is itself devoid of all actuality. In Aquinas's system, entities of the finite world are grounded in something at once fully actual and illimited (with the consequence that God alone is the source of creation). In Whitehead's differing vision, actual entities are grounded in something that is nowise actual even if unlimited. The former is Subsistent *Esse;* the latter is pure process called Creativity. Whitehead's eternal objects explain content but not actuality. The novel concrescence of such content (in the actual occasion's self-creation) explains *essential* actuality, that is, the concretion or individuation of some formal perfection. But *existential* actuality remains unexplained and ungrounded, and this occasions Whitehead's recourse to the category of Creativity.[12]

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[11] God 'and world are both " in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty " ; *Process and Reality,* p. 59.

[12] This has been persuasively argued by David L. Schindler, " Creativity as Ultimate: Reflections on Actuality in Whitehead, Aristotle, and Aquinas," *Internat. Phil. Quarterly,* July, 1973; his conclusion is that " creativity is finally inadequate as ultimate in Whitehead's metaphysics because, not being itself actual, it cannot ground the actualities of actual entities, in contrast with *esse*

But all of this brings us to the question that Process Theists cannot easily dispose of: How can anything that lacks all actuality function as the explanatory principle of the fact that there *are* finite instances of actuality (that there are beings rather than nothing) ? At this point differences appear logically irreconcilable. The Gods of Thomas and Whitehead are, respectively, infinite determination and finite determination because the former is an inference from the finite beingness of the world while the latter is an extrapolation of the dipolarity that characterizes human conscious activity.

2. The Affirmation of "Abstract" Infinity

Rejecting a physical infinity, one that is actual in a determinately existential way, Lewis Ford believes the divine infinity can still be saved by viewing God as actually infinite in his envisagement of an infinity of pure possibilities. The possibilities themselves constitute only a potential infinitude. Any actualization of them by way of divine decision remains always finite. The real question then concerns God's actual relationship to such a realm of possibility. Ford suggests that this relationship is one of an envisagement that is at once actual and itself infinite. But how is this position distinguishable from Aquinas's own?

The answer lies in attending to the dipolar structure of the God of Process Thought. For Aquinas, the existential being and the conscious being of God are one and the same, indistinguishable save mentally. For Whitehead they must be kept in a state of real distinction, for otherwise dipolarity loses all significance. Whereas Hartshorne's clarification of Whitehead makes clear that the mental pole of God's being, his primordial nature, is entirely non-actual, Ford's thought departs markedly from that of Hartshorne in conceiving the primordial nature as fully actual and so infinite.[18] But the actuality and infinity

in Aquinas, which is concretized in a single Source that is supremely actual, God as *ipsum esse subsistens*;" p. 171.

[18] Whitehead leaves the relationship between the two natures in God obscure and undeveloped, leading to the observation that some critics suspect two Gods

are non-temporal in kind and so unlike the finite actuality of actual occasions that are temporal. This means that God's infinity, far from excluding finitude, in fact demands it. The infinity as restricted to an envisagement of an infinitude of pure possibilities itself needs completion by way of further actuality which is temporal and determinate in a physical sense. But then the actuality of the primordial nature is no longer *pure act.*

If God's envisagement of creative possibilities is unlimited—and here Thomists and Process Thinkers are in agreement—there can be only two possible explanations of this. Either it is itself grounded in a vision of pure actuality (Aquinas), or it remains groundless and self-explanatory (Ford). But in the latter case what is ultimate is the pure possibility that God envisages, not his envisagement thereof; the former seemingly represents a realm that is abstract and ideal, reducible in the final analysis to mere indefiniteness. What is at issue here is the way in which the metaphysical principle of potency and act is viewed. For the Thomist, all possibility is ultimately grounded in and derived from actuality: what is determines what can be. For the followers of Whitehead metaphysical priority is given to the realm of the possible: the Eternal Objects offer limitless promise of the world that can be. Thus a universe of process has no terminus other than an inexhaustible becoming. But because the Eternal Objects are themselves devoid of all actuality, the limitlessness they found is an ideal

(cf. G. Reeves and D. Brown, " The Development of Process Theory " in *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought,* ed. D. Brown, R. E. James, and G. Reeves, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), p. 31. Nonetheless, *Process and Reality* notes that " as primordial, so far is he from 'eminent reality' that in this abstraction he is 'deficiently actual' . . . His feelings are only conceptual and so lack the fullness of actuality . . . (and are) . . . devoid of consciousness in their subjective forms," p. 521. Hartshorne makes clear in *The Divine Relativity* (Yale U. Press, 1948) and in *Philosophers Speak of God* (U. of Chicago Press, 1953) that God has two aspects or dimensions to his being; nonetheless the primordial aspect is abstract, absolute, and included in the consequent aspect which alone is concrete, relative, and actual. For a more detailed development of Ford's alternative view, cf. his " Whitehead's Transformation of Pure Act," *The Thomist,* July, 1977.

and logical one. Transition to actual existence by way of self-positing decision is always finitizing.

It is at this point that Ford's thought has recourse to God's envisaging act, prior to all decision. Such envisagement means that the open realm of possibility becomes ordered and meaningful, yet remaining *pure* possibility—that is, not yet constituting *real* possibility, which Ford maintains can be only potentially infinite. What constitutes the move to real possibility is availability for some actual occasion, on which basis the latter can actualize the possibility in a way proper to itself, without yet having done so. Before making one or several possibilities truly available, by supplying the initial aims for actual occasions, God grasps an infinity of possibilities in the mental pole of his being.

A reservation on this divine envisagement of pure possibility, however, is that it appears to be subjectively finite and only objectively infinite. The vision, as something actual and constitutive of God's mental being, remains the finite vision of a non-actual infinitude. Infinity is petitioned in terms of content, in terms of what God knows rather than his very knowing. The infiniteness of God's primordial knowing, then, is not the contemplation of his own unlimited actuality as this is realizable in an infinite variety of possible worlds. It is rather the intending of an infinitude not grounded in God himself, but constituting a realm unto itself that is i) non-divine, ii) non-actual, and iii) an eternal, uncreated correlate to God. What is truly possible then may be viewed in two ways: either it is grounded in God's own actuality (Aquinas), or else pure possibility itself must be alloted the status of ultimacy (Ford). It is at this point that the concepts of God as dipolar and as pure act appear mutually exclusive.

3. Postscript: The Further Question

But this Thomistic alternative to Ford's development of Whitehead leaves a problem of its own unresolved. A God infinite in the Thomistic sense is by necessity immutable, and

thereby can relate to history only in a fully determining way, seemingly evacuating the temporal process of all intrinsic meaning and value. Does this not fly in the face of contemporary man's deepest convictions about and commitment to his own authentic being as temporal? Such convictions seek to rescue the value of an ever fleeing present precisely by viewing human consciousness as ever moving out of history toward the realization of its projects. But an infinitely actual God makes that a mere illusion; whatever emerges in history has at best only a relative novelty with respect to its antecedents, and so finally " there is nothing genuinely new under the sun." A God not susceptible of further determination seemingly means a history determined beforehand in its terminus and its course.

If Thomism is not to be a closed system it must be capable of absorbing, within the perspective of its own wisdom, insights into truth originating elsewhere, but without violating its own inner coherence and character. In this spirit, I should like to draw attention to three possible ways out of the above dilemma. i) One is to take the path of Karl Rahner and introduce into Being as Pure Act the dialectical dimension borrowed from Hegel. The beingness of God is then processive in kind; it is a dynamism that ever comes to itself by continually going out into the other. This occurs *within* God without any addition or alteration to his own intrinsic being (the inner Trinitarian processions), but it is prolongated outside of God who thereby does change, yet not in himself but in the other (the Logos become flesh). But in this latter instance it is God himself who changes in the other and not simply the other in its autonomous being.[14] This ingenious explanation does allow us to take seriously the phenomenon of becoming and so not to dismiss history as the mere reading off of a script

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[14] Karl Rahner, " On the Theology of the Incarnation," *Theological Investigations,* IV (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), note 3, pp. 113-114: " God who is unchangeable in himself can change in another . . . But this ' changing *in* another ' must neither be taken as denying the immutability of God in himself nor simply be reduced to a changement *of* the other."

written beforehand. It does, however, carry with it difficulties of its own. Apart from the fact that being for Aquinas is not dialectical but analogical (something quite different), and is this in its ontic and not merely in its logical structure, such a theory appears to compromise God's freedom in choosing to extend himself into a world. The "infinite qualitative difference" is called into question, if not in fact replaced by the dialectic between the two poles of being. Rahner's grasp of being in these latter categories appears to have the peculiar consequence of ascribing a quasi infinity to finite spiritual being.[15] At any rate, the suspicion remains that, in the logic of Rahner's thought, God's being is affected *in itself*, and his denial of this is only a verbal one.

ii) W. Norris Clarke has addressed the problem differently, yet still from within an ambience that is Thomistic. He allows " genuine novelty . . . both in the real being God communicates to creatures, *and in the intentional content of His consciousness* determinately knowing and willing them [which is] not change in His own intrinsic being or perfection "[16] (emphasis sup-

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[15] All that this means is that Rahner so emphasizes the essential relationship of finite being to infinite being, that such a polarization to the infinite enters into the very definition of the former; man is thus " incarnate spirit " rather than " rational animal." Further, this would appear to be the implication of such a statement of Rahner's as the following: " *esse,* given in sensibility as limited, is apprehended as unlimited in itself in a pre-apprehension attaining to *esse* as such " ; *Spirit in the World* (N. Y., Herder and Herder, 1968), p. 157.

Rahner's thought develops against the background of a divine dialectic of self-differentiation in which the notion of creation as commonly understood gives way to that of a self-giving on God's part; the difference is that in the latter God establishes the other " as his own reality " (" On the Theology of the Incarnation," *Theol. Invest.*, IV, p. 114). This is clearly indigenous to Hegel's dialectic of the concept which becomes identical with itself in the other. Rahner surmounts Hegel at this point by refusing any reduction of God to the mere processes of thought, but he does this simply by insisting that God is "Absolute Mystery." All this depends upon seeing the structure of man's being as an openness to God's absolute being, which openness consummates itself in the event of Incarnation. At bottom, however, remains the question as to whether Rahner is not too facile in overcoming the abyss between God and creature.

[16] " The Immutability of God," *God Knowable and Unknowable*, ed.: R. J. Roth (Fordham U. Press, 1973), p. 49. See Ford's appreciative response to this approach in " The Immutable God and Father Clarke," *New Scholasticism*, Spring, 1975, 189-199.

plied). Here, in effect, the creature does add a determination to God, rendering him thereby receptive toward man, but one limited to the content of what God knows about the world, and so to the values toward which his love responds. This is intelligible because such determination is " only a delimitation (i. e. partial negation) or channeling of the way in which I allow His active cooperating power to flow through my will." [17]

iii) This, however, suggests a third way of dealing with the question, one that seeks a more radical ground for the sort of distinction suggested by Clarke. Heidegger's discovery and exploration of the Ontological Difference, of the distinction between Being (*Sein*) and beings (*das Seiende*), has served to draw attention to another realm entirely, one prior to that of essence and existence. If, for Heidegger, this domain is reduced to that of the pure process whereby things come into being, nothing prohibits its being reconstrued as the domain proper to freedom—so as to overcome Heidegger's characterization of it as Fate. So recast, it becomes that sphere in which persons, in a self-determining and self-creative act, posit themselves as *who* they are and will be. What is posited in such a self-creative process is not nature but a pure relationality within nature, i. e., between the subjectivities of a nature that allows for freedom. The personal is that which precisely " lets be " the other in its very otherness, and in this way defines itself by the other. Its prime instance is that subsisting relationality within the Godhead which is constitutive of a divine life of inter-communication, of the divine *koinonia* of Father, Son, and Spirit.

These latter two explanations face a common objection, namely the real identity in God of existential and intentional being (Clarke), and of nature and person (an alternative explanation). There is of course such a *real* identity (thus, these distinctions stop short of introducing the sort of dipolarity within the divine nature of which Process Theists speak) but there is a formal distinction that enables us to say of one what

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

cannot be said of the other. Knowing and loving represent modes of becoming that do not preclude a permanency or changelessness on another level entirely. Compassion at the suffering of a friend means in one sense that I suffer what he does, yet in another sense that I do not: I may die a thousand deaths with him without undergoing his biological death. In a remotely analogous way Father, Son, and Spirit are one identical God but not thereby identified with each other. The basis for making such a formal distinction is that the reference in one case is made to what is intrinsic to God, and in the other to his extrinsic relationality *ad extra*. This is somewhat different from speaking, as do Process Theists, of a dipolarity within the divine nature itself which seemingly means two intrinsic components to divinity. In their case, the conceptual contrariety between infinity and finitude precludes treating the distinction as merely formal, such as that between attributes not mutually exclusive, e. g., mercy and justice.

The key to such conceptual and linguistic differentiation, in the case of nature and person, lies in the mystery of freedom. Abstractly, freedom is a property of nature, but its exercise is the prerogative of person as the existential instantiation of nature. The person viewed ontologically (as subject of the act of existing) thus determines itself through its nature to be the sort of person it is, viewed psychologically and historically. In the instance of finite natures with limited freedom, this self-determination is by way of personal choice among the various causal influences unavoidably exerted upon its nature. An infinite nature whose freedom is transcendent suffers no such passive influx; here the personal decision occurs in uncreated freedom. And, in the mystery of a love that allows the other to be in its very otherness, that choice is one of willing to be constituted, personally and so relationally, and in this sense to be determined, by other free beings.

So envisaged, what results from this is a creature (man) who cannot alter his nature, yet remains the undetermined maker of his history, the one who determines who he is within the

limits prescribed, singly and collectively, by his nature. God then determines what man is summoned to by his nature (and by that transfinalization of nature that is grace), but actual attainment thereto is left as something to be won out of history, to be appropriated in modes that remain open to the dialogue between God and man.[18] Something of this is exhibited by the cosmos itself on the infra-human level; there evolutionary change occurs within a system that guarantees identity and continuity, and thereby forestalls intelligibility collapsing into mere randomness.[19]

Thus God, remaining transcendent in his immutable nature, chooses in the freedom of personhood to undergo history, and to wait upon man's gift of self (or its refusal). When God comes into the world (in the Incarnation) it is as person, not as nature; it is man who supplies the nature to the Logos.

WILLIAM J. HILL, O. P.

Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C.

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[18] For an attempt at further development of the perennial question, cf. two earlier studies of mine: "Does God Know the Future?", Theol. Studies, March, 1975; and "Does the World Make a Difference to God?", The Thomist, Jan., 1974. The resolution to which these studies incline is one allowing that God does know the free future but without any causal predetermination thereof. To suppose that God knows all that there is to be known, but that the future is not yet and so remains unknowable except as possible even to God, appears to compromise what it means to say God is eternal. Still, the creaturely self-determination occurs not outside divine causality but precisely within it and because of it; such causality in its analogous and transcendent character, far from opposing human self-determination, is in fact its very condition.

[19] A suggestive expression of this view is to be found in John V. Taylor: The Go-Between God (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 28-30.

THE TACIT IN EXPERIENCE: POLANYI AND WHITEHEAD

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THERE IS A striking resemblance between some of the work of Michael Polanyi and that of A. N. Whitehead. As one of his foremost interpreters, Marjorie Grene, observes, Polanyi's " approach has much in common with some forms of existentialist and phenomenological thought as well as with the *Lebensphilosophie* of Dilthey and the organismic philosophy of Whitehead."[1] While Grene does not herself explore these commonalities in any detail, the one in which we are interested involves various epistemological and ontological features of what Polanyi calls the " tacit dimension " and of Whitehead's analysis of experience. I wish to explore this resemblance here, and to indicate ways in which their work can be mutually supportive.

Both philosophers are speculative thinkers whose reflections range over a vast array of human achievement and thought. Of the two, Whitehead is the more systematic and Polanyi the more concrete. If there is genuine commonality in various respects, it may be that some of the variety of examples which Polanyi provides can serve as concrete illustrations for Whitehead's theory of experience. The systematic scope of Whitehead's theory, in turn, may be able to give additional rigor and form to some of the general theses which Polanyi is presenting. At any rate this is a possibility which we shall consider.

Both Polanyi and Whitehead entered philosophy late in their lives—Polanyi as a chemist and Whitehead as a mathematician. Each entered in part because he had reservations about the philosophical underpinnings of science. Whitehead was con-

[1] *The Knower and the Known* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 14.

cerned that people forget too easily the selective character of inquiry that is essential to scientific activity and knowledge. Because they forget, they are likely to substitute a tissue of concepts for the fullness of reality. Misplaced concreteness is a temptation for all and particularly so in science. Polanyi was concerned about the ideal of science as detached and impersonal knowledge. Such an ideal of exact science is mischievous because it is unattainable. There can be no wholly explicit knowledge. Inquiry can never eliminate the tacit and, thereby, the personal element of knowledge.

This is an issue which may be more familiar when cast in the terms of the later work of Edmund Husserl. In fact, it may be that this is what Grene had in mind in her reference to phenomenology. Science, Husserl argued, presupposes the life-world for its very meaningfulness. By this he meant that it is our common and pre-given experience that is the matrix for all our scientific abstractions. It is this prior world of perception and daily activity which is the fundament for the sciences. It is the life-world that functions " not as something irrelevant that must be passed through, but as that which ultimately grounds the theoretical-logical ontic validity for all objective verification, i. e., as the source of self-evidence, the source of verification." [2] It follows, then, that the precision and objectivity of science are logically derivative, not basic.

Husserl retained the ideal of philosophy as an exact science, however, and his work also ultimately involves theses about the constitutiveness of consciousness—an ideal and theses which distinguish his thought from that of both Whitehead and Polanyi.[3] It is rather this important priority of pre-scientific experience which is one of the basic points upon which both Whitehead and Polanyi alike are insisting. Let us turn first to the way in which Polanyi presents this notion. It involves his

[2] *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 126.

[3] In another essay I have explored in greater detail these and other differences between Husserl and Whitehead. See "Husserl's *Crisis* and Whitehead's Process Philosophy," *The Personalist* (Summer, 1975), pp. 289-300.

concept of the tacit, one of the most suggestive features of his work. Following this, we shall look at Whitehead and then at the ontologies of the two men.

I

According to Polanyi, the tacit dimension is the foundation or presupposition of all knowledge and of all activity. Let us clarify this by considering the character of comprehension. Within any act of comprehension, he argues, there is both a focal awareness and a subsidiary awareness. The object of focal awareness is that of which we may have explicit knowledge. However, we achieve this knowledge only by virtue of the clues provided by things of which we have subsidiary or tacit awareness. Thus, the structure of tacit knowledge includes a " from-to " relation such that we attend *from* one term *to* a second term. The first term is what Polanyi call the proximal; the second is the distal. We attend from the subsidiary to the focal, from the proximal to the distal, from clues to an object, or from component parts to a comprehensive whole. In each case, we integrate the former in the latter.

Polanyi's favorite example is perception, and particularly our recognition of a familiar physiognomy. Recall, he asks us, " how our eyes integrate a thousand rapidly changing clues into the appearance of an object of constant shape, size, and colour, moving before us.[4]" These clues are indispensable in our explicit knowledge, but as tacit they are never the object of attention. In the case of the face, we know that it is Aunt Agatha's, but we find ourselves unable to identify clearly the subsidiary factors which lead us to this awareness.

Of course, we could turn our attention to at least some of these tacit components, but we thereby change their functioning and in the process presuppose yet other subsidiary elements. Not only acts of synthesis but also acts of analysis involve the tacit. For instance, to analyze a whole is to use

[4] " The Logic of Tacit Inference," *Knowing and Being,* ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 150.

that whole tacitly in the process of attending from it to its parts. Accordingly, Polanyi contends that at any moment whatever explicit knowlege we enjoy is achieved only through the tacit use of still other knowledge and capacities. The attempt to formalize all knowledge will not work. Impersonal, in the sense of fully explicit, knowledge is an illusory goal.

For instance, even a "mathematical theory can be constructed only by relying on *prior* tacit knowing and can function as a theory only *within* an act of tacit knowing, which consists in our attending *from* it to the previously established experience on which it bears."[5] It is for this reason that Polanyi contends that we always "know more than we can tell."[6] Some subsidiary components are ones of which we are quite conscious, others are not. 'The level of consciousness at which we are aware of a subsidiary particular may vary over the whole range of possible levels."[7] In any case, explicit knowledge—be it perceptual or theoretical, ordinary or esoteric—always involves this larger, unfocalized range of awareness on which it depends. There is always a larger context which is both presupposed and involved; a context which can be variously described as bodily, historical, or social.

I said earlier that the tacit dimension is the foundation or presupposition of all activity, as well as of all knowledge. Activity involves the tacit, for acts also are processes of integration with a from-to structure. This is true of simple muscular coordination and movement involved in perception. More complex bodily skills are also to be understood as integrations of parts into intended focal outcomes. What we are accustomed now to call "knowledge how" is rooted in bodily skills the workings of which we are unable to detail. Knowing how to

[5] *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966), p. 21.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[7] "Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading," *Knowing and Being*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 197. The passage continues: "Some subsidiary things, like the processes in our inner ear, of which we are aware in feeling the position of our head, are profoundly unconscious, strictly subliminal."

ride a bicycle and to type a letter are personal achievements—they involve the ability to bring subsidiary muscular components into a desired focal outcome. Explicit knowledge of theories of balance and principles of mechanics is altogether useless here—we acquire such bodily abilities by tacit, not explicit, processes.

Polanyi, then, gives sweeping extension to the notion of the tacit. The integration of the tacit underlies scientific discovery, technical invention, and aesthetic creation and appreciation. It figures in historical and ethical thought. It describes the way we achieve meaning through the use of language or other symbol systems. And, as we just saw, the from-to structure functions in perception, in muscular coordination, and in bodily skills.

Closely connected with the notion of the tacit is what Polanyi calls " indwelling." By this term he is drawing our attention to the way in which we dwell in the subsidiary components of awareness. Pre-eminently this means that we are embodied and that our experience always carries with it these roots. Ultimately the body functions as the instrument of all knowing and acting so that we have a subsidiary awareness of it in all that we do. As Polanyi notes, " our own body is the only thing in the world which we normally never experience as an object, but experience always in terms of the world to which we are attending from our body." [8] This is clear in terms of the uses we make of our bodies in perception and action and through these in communication with others. Such use also includes the physical extension of our bodies through tools and instruments. In each case we integrate internal components in some ruled fashion, though one unknown explicitly, to bear on externality. Generally the only times we are focally aware of internal processes is when we are in pain.

More is involved in indwelling, however, than literal physical embodiedness. When we make something function as the proximal term, " we incorporate it in our body—or extend our

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[8] *Tacit Dimension*, p. 16.

body to include it—so that we come to dwell in it." [9] To dwell in something, then, is to treat it subsidiarily, in the same way that we treat our bodies. An alternative expression for indwelling is "interiorization." When we truly accept moral principles or scientific theories, for instance, we interiorize them. They function as proximal terms in our processes of understanding—we attend to other things from them. These noetic frameworks form part of our conceptual dwelling.

This has been only a brief review of Polanyi's epistemology. It should be clear, though, that he puts the notions of the tacit and of indwelling to considerable use. They are truly general concepts intended to be descriptive of the structure of knowing and acting. They also remind us of the futility of an absolutely "impersonal" account of knowledge. Such an ideal is impossible because it omits the constantly presupposed tacit dimensions in terms of which we understand. No knowledge can be entirely explicit. Logical positivism in scientific explanation and similarly restrictive philosophical theories in other fields are for this reason mistaken.

II

Whitehead's analysis of experience presents a number of interesting similarities. He, too, argues that experience involves more than we can analyze and that, in this sense, we know more than we can ever tell. Also, he views experience as a process of integration of all kinds of influences into a totality different from and more than any of its constituents. Finally, he contends that chief among these influences are bodily ones which nevertheless do not call attention to themselves . Let us explore these features in greater detail.

Description of conscious experience presupposes a more general description of experience as such. In fact, the ultimate task of philosophy is to recover the character of actuality from which consciousness abstracts. " We experience more than we

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[9] *Ibid.*

can analyze, for we experience the universe, and we analyze in our consciousness a minute selection of its details." [10] We need then a reversal of abstraction and a formulation of the character or structure of the wealth from which the emphasis of consciousness selects. The only starting place for this is the experience we do enjoy. Our individual experience is the original fact.

Thus, descriptions of experience presuppose, and must be judged in terms of, the concrete experience immediately present to each of us at each succeeding moment. But this must be done with care. We must divest ourselves of prior conceptions and theories, and allow this experience to present itself as such. When we do this, Whitehead contends, we are aware of a vague sense of activity and passage, heavily causal in character, with specific features only dimly discernible. This primary experience, as we shall call it, lies beneath the more clearly defined presentation of sense data and geometrical location. The first, more primordial, sense is of what Whitehead calls causal efficacy. The second, more superficial, layer is what he calls presentational immediacy.

Many of the previous efforts in the history of philosophy to analyze experience have tended to emphasize presentational immediacy. This is a mistake, Whitehead thinks, for we thereby lose sight of the evidence for causality, for connectedness, and indeed for otherness in general. A Cartesian stress upon clear and distinct ideas as the criterion of knowledge accelerates the difficulty, for what is philosophically most important is what is most vague and unclear in conscious experience. The problems generated by the kind of empiricism culminating in Hume are good evidence of this. We must beware of concepts which stress the isolated and the changeless, for they are not at the foundation of experience.

Whitehead's systematic philosophy involves the construction of a number of concepts proposed as adequate for the explication and interpretation of experience. Chief among these is

[10] *Modes of Thought* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 121.

the notion of " concrescence," his term for the coming together of influences from the past through the unifying activity of the present. The present moment is always a process of simplifying, integrating, and unifying the variety of data which flood in from the immediate past. Concrescence is descriptive of subjectivity and involves a subject engaged in the production of itself through the way the data are integrated.

Another systematic term which must be introduced is " prehension." Each concrescence is composed of prehensions or feelings. A prehension is a concrete internal relation, descriptive both of intentionality and of causal influence. It is descriptive of causal influence because a prehension is the relation between an object and a subject which must thereby take account of that object. Causality is thus the efficaciousness of objects in the self-constitution of subjects. A prehension is also descriptive of intentionality for it is a feeling *of* its object. Within concrescence the subject is defined by both its data and the specific manner of its handling of them. There is no subjectivity which is not constituted by the unification of data objective to itself.

Whitehead puts the notion of concrescence to a variety of uses. It is chiefly an ontological concept, descriptive of the primary reality of what is most concrete. As such, each concrescence is termed an actual entity or occasion. Concrescence also functions in Whitehead's epistemology, with an outcome quite similar to Polanyi's concept of the tacit. Experience in each moment always involves simplification—such that any object of explicit attention is surrounded by a variety of other objects of which we are only vaguely aware, but which function to highlight that object.

Whitehead's own epistemology is directed mainly to the interplay between causal efficacy and presentational immediacy in the production of a unified experience. This interplay involves what he calls symbolic reference. This is the process in which notions of causality are attributed to specific ranges of sense experience, and sense objects function to evoke concepts from causal efficacy.

I think that Polanyi's analysis of tacit knowing can give illustration to at least part of what Whitehead is saying. Polanyi distinguishes four features or structures of tacit knowing. We shall examine the first three here, reserving the last for section four. The first, the functional structure, is simply the role of particular components (usually unspecifiable) in bearing on the whole in question. In Whitehead's analysis this functional structure is in fact the structure which underlies each moment of experience. In each moment, conscious or not, data are being integrated into an outcome in which they function subsidiarily.

The second feature, the phenomenal structure, is that feature of tacit knowing in which we are vaguely aware of the subsidiary in the appearance of the focal. Because the whole is more than an aggregate of parts, the parts will be transformed in appearance in the whole. In Whitehead's terms there is an integration of parts or feelings whereby these parts assume a role in the whole which transcends their own particularity. A typical example is the role of particular colors in a rich painting.

The third or semantic structure combines the functional and phenomenal aspects by its emphasis upon meaning or significance. For instance, we can say of the subsidiary parts that "it is in terms of their meaning that they enter in to the appearance of that *to* which we are attending *from*."[11] They both receive their meaning from, and contribute to the meaning of, the focal event. Thus, we understand syllables and letters in terms of the meaning to which we are attending from them.

In Whitehead's analysis of experience the significance entertained in consciousness is emergent from prior activity in a sense I hope to explain in systematic terms in the next section. Here we can observe with him that "consciousness flickers; and even at its brightest, there is a small focal region of clear illumination, and a large penumbral region of experience which tells of intense experience in dim apprehension."[12] Conscious-

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[11] *Tacit Dimension,* p. 12.
[12] *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 408.

ness involves the integration into centers of meaning of concepts derived from this large penumbral region.

Let us turn now to the centrality of embodiedness. For both philosophers knowledge is an outgrowth of, and is rooted in, organic life. As centered selves, we build our experiences out of our bodily deliverances. For Whitehead, as for Polanyi, this means that our bodies serve as our points of reference, the means whereby we locate everything else. Further, though this is perhaps clearer in Whitehead, our bodies serve as amplifiers for our experience, calling attention in the process not to themselves ordinarily, but rather to what is transmitted or achieved. As Whitehead puts it, " the human body . . . concentrates upon those elements in human experiences selected for conscious perception intensities of subjective form derived from components dismissed into shadow." [13] On the other hand, the felt " withness " of the body provides clear testimony to its subsidiary use.[14] For both philosophers, then, our embodiedness is the means whereby we experience the world and orient ourselves in regard to it. It is our central dwelling, functioning constantly in a subsidiary manner.

Still another area in which Polanyi's analysis of the tacit can give illustration to a Whiteheadian thesis relates to self-consciousness. Whitehead contends that it is impossible for the satisfaction or completion of concrescence to contain consciousness of itself.[15] For one thing, this would open the door to an infinite regress, thereby threatening the integrity of concrescence. Polanyi's analysis suggests another reason: to attempt to identify the particulars by virtue of which a present process of integration is accomplished is to require that these

[13] *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), p. 439.

[14] Whitehead contends that such " withness " provides direct evidence of causal efficacy and accuses Hume of inconsistency in recognizing this withness of the body but concluding to his form of scepticism about causality. See *Process and Reality*, p. 125.

[15] " No actual entity can be conscious of its own satisfaction; for such knowledge would be a component in the process, and would thereby alter the satisfaction." *Process and Reality*, p. 130.

particulars function subsidiarily and focally at the same time. We dwell *in* this integration and cannot at the same time attend *to* it.[16]

III

Polanyi's notion of the tacit dimension and its integration can in these ways serve to clarify and illustrate parts of Whitehead's epistemology. However, the process philosopher can in turn provide assistance in understanding some other features of how the tacit operates. I have in mind particularly what we might call the social and historical dimensions of the tacit as well as those dealing with what we term the transmission of the tacit. Forms of life and institutions in which we dwell are profoundly social in character and yet also effective in individual thought and action. Similarly, conceptual and bodily skills as well as knowledge once achieved or acquired must be transmitted into the new present. It is not clear from Polanyi how we are to understand this.

In this context Whitehead's systematic concepts of " proposition " and of " transmutation " are highly significant. A proposition is a hybrid entity, entertained in experience as a contrast or fusion between a nexus of occasions and a complex form of definiteness. The former is the logical subject (s) and the latter is the predicative pattern. A proposition, then, is a possibility of a set of actualities exhibiting some particular quality in a " determinate mode of restricted reference." [17]

The main function of propositions, in Whitehead's view, is not for belief or for judgment, but rather " to be relevant as a lure for feeling " and thus as data for the self-constitution of subjects.[18] Propositions have their own kind of reality and

[16] I have argued elsewhere for the distinction between datal and adverbial consciousness. Datal consciousness is consciousness of the self by that same self in that moment and is ruled out by both Whitehead and Polanyi. By contrast, adverbial consciousness is that awareness accompanying the process of integration; it is awareness *with,* rather than awareness *of,* that process. See "A Suggestion on ' Consciousness ' in *Process and Reality," Process Studies* (Spring, 1973), pp. 41-42.

[17] *Process and Reality,* p. 393.

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 37.

exist independent of any particular finite subject.[19] "In every proposition, as such and without going beyond it, there is complete indeterminateness so far as concerns its own realization in a propositional feeling, and as regards its own truth."[20] As lures for feeling, propositions function to evoke relevant subjects into recreating them in their own subjective immediacy. Subjects are relevant to the extent that they are of sufficient complexity to include the required logical subjects.

Transmutation, in turn, is the mental operation involving propositional feelings whereby similar forms of definiteness are judged to apply to similar actualities so that the actualities as a whole are felt to have the unity of one object defined by the same predicate. A simple illustration comes from perceptual experience. Thus our experience of the many blades of grass as green issues in our experience of the green lawn. But the concept of transmutation holds promise for a much wider range of application. Think, for example, of the special kinds of value and meaning that Polanyi identifies as the semantic structure of tacit knowledge. And then consider the distinction that Donald Sherburne makes between vertical and horizontal transmutation as drawing attention to the difference between extensive and intensive meaning respectively.

Vertical transmutation refers to the operation whereby feelings of microcosmic entities are integrated into macrocosmic perception. Horizontal transmutation "is a category to concentrate macrocosmic entities into *one focal point of experience*."[21] The focal point is saturated with the significance or meaning derivative from relevant, related past experiences. To use Sherburne's own illustration: "it is in terms of vertical

[19] The reason for the qualification is the necessary reference to the primordial nature of God which the ontological principle requires in this case. The ontological principle is that "every condition to which the process of becoming conforms in any particular instance, has its reason *either* in the character of some actual entity in the actual world of that concrescence, *or* in the character of the subject which is in process of concrescence," *Process and Reality*, p. 36.

[20] *Process and Reality*, p. 394.

[21] Donald Sherburne, *A Whiteheadian Aesthetic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 162.

transmutation that the welter of actual occasions constitutive of a man are prehended as a unity, but it is in virtue of horizontal transmutation that significance is attached to the concept of ' man.' " [22]

Horizontal transmutation also applies to other, more encompassing, features of the tacit, such as the social and cultural institutions which tacitly govern our thought and action. Such social institutions are the product of the customary objectifications or associations of particular predicative patterns with particular logical subjects. The predicative patterns define the significance attached to that object or action, function as rules for the use or objectification or understanding of the object or action, and thus constitute it a social institution. It follows that social institutions are not, of themselves, self-perpetuating, but are sustained only through the individual members or persons constituting the society with those institutions.

Whitehead's systematic concepts can also clarify the transmission of tacit powers from the past into the present. In Whitehead's philosophy ideas, practices, and institutions once laboriously established in mentality or abstracted from previous practice and then clarified in mentality can be understood as transmitted subsequently in a manner not unlike physical causation. Whitehead's term for this is hybrid physical prehension—the physical feeling of conceptual activity in a past occasion. Both data and subjective form or valuation of the data are part of the inheritance from the past requiring conformal prehension in the present. For instance, what we are to understand by ' objective nature ' is itself an idea intersubjectively established or clarified. But once established or clarified, the idea then exercises power over subsequent thinking. It is a power in which we dwell which functions like a disposition, being called into play when appropriate.

Thus, what was once an essentially intellectual affair later exerts an almost physical influence—as technology so vividly illustrates in our own day. Institutions such as our concept

[22] *Ibid.,* p. 163.

of law or of 'objective nature' always have associated with them a dimension of mentality that the more physical influences do not. But the former is like the latter in that ideas as well as skills once won only with great effort can be retained with minimal attention, and indeed frequently function with no attention or effort as embedded in our primary experience inherited from our past. They are defining characteristics genetically imposed by the past upon the present and effective until revised. As we dwell in them, they function tacitly or subsidiarily.

IV

The other dimension of Polanyi's thought which we shall explore relates to the ontological. Polanyi terms the fourth structure of tacit knowing the ontological structure. This is because he claims an isomorphism between knowing and being—a correspondence between the structure of comprehension and its object. He contends that we will "find the structure of tacit knowing duplicated in the principles which account for the stability and effectiveness of all real comprehensive entities." [23]

The universe Polanyi depicts is filled with strata of realities linked in hierarchies. The relation of a higher reality to a lower one is that of a comprehensive entity to its particulars. The parallel with tacit knowing is that "the operations of a higher level cannot be accounted for by the laws governing its particulars forming the lower level." [24] Just as the data known subsidiarily function to make possible the focal object, so the lower level of reality makes possible the higher—but in neither case does the former determine the latter.

A convenient illustration is the giving of a speech, with its five-levelled hierarchy of comprehensive entities, the principles of each level leaving room for control by those of the next higher level:

The voice you produce is shaped into words by a vocabulary; a given vocabulary is shaped into sentences in accordance with gram-

[23] *Tacit Dimension*, p. 34.   [24] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

mar; and the sentences can be made to fit into a style, which in its turn is made to convey the ideas of a literary composition.[25]

The illustration concerns human skills and performances, but according to Polanyi the principle applies to persons themselves as well as to the hierarchy of levels found elsewhere among natural entities. All living things, for instance, rest upon the principles explicated by chemistry and physics, but they are not reducible to these principles. Among living things, in turn, there is a clear hierarchy of biotic levels. In each case, " it is impossible to represent the organizing principles of a higher level by the laws governing its isolated particulars." [26] It has its own integrity.

Another important example is Polanyi's analysis of the mind-body relationship in these terms. Here also we are to understand " the relation between body and mind as an instance of the relation between the subsidiary and the focal in tacit knowledge." [27] The logical structure governing tacit knowing mirrors the ontological structure governing persons. The bodily principles studied in biology and physiology constitute the boundary conditions governed by the higher principle of mentality. We lose sight of the higher principle when, like behaviorists, we concentrate solely on the lower—the bodily workings. Then we fail to see the integration accomplished by mentality—its functioning as it operates within the boundary conditions left indeterminate by neurophysiological mechanisms. We dwell fully only in our own bodies and our minds are their principles of highest integration. It is in this sense that " mind is the meaning of certain bodily mechanisms; it is lost from view when we look at them focally." [28]

The resemblance to Whitehead's theory of societies of actual occasions is considerable. For he too speaks of higher or more

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] " The Structure of Consciousness," *Knowing and Being,* ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 219.

[28] " Life's Irreducible Structure," *Knowing and Being,* ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 238.

complex entities which presuppose and involve lower ones. Such complex entities both depend upon these lower ones and are unaccountable in terms solely of them. In this sense, Whitehead accepts Polanyi's principle of dual control. As we saw, Polanyi claims that different principles control a comprehensive entity at different levels. Whitehead claims that a complex society includes a number of simpler societies, thereby including though also transcending their defining characteristics.

Societies with consciousness, for instance, are a higher system and integrating unity of lower system physiological processes. The higher system is governed by—in the sense of dependent upon—certain of the restrictions controlling the lower order system, but is not reducible to it. Yet the higher order system (in this case, mind) is not of a different ontological type from the lower. It differs from it rather by virtue of its greater complexity. In this way Whitehead locates mentality firmly within natural processes and views it as a natural emergent.

It is because Whitehead sees nature as alive and mind as rooted in it that Marjorie Grene expresses her admiration for his thought.

Ever since Descartes, even ever since Democritus, men have tried to rectify the alienation of the intellect and to make our thoughts more at home in the world. In this century, the most profound and comprehensive effort of this sort has been the philosophy of Whitehead.[29]

She also suggests that " the ontology that issues from Polanyi's or from Merleau-Ponty's arguments about knowledge is in many points close to that of Whitehead." [30] Merleau-Ponty is not under consideration here, but we have agreed about the similarity between Polanyi and Whitehead. Yet there are dif-

[29] *Knower and the Known*, p. 224. On p. 227 she observes that *Nature and Life* ought, together with *Process and Reality*, to have constituted as marked a turning point in Western philosophy as that initiated by the Cartesian *Meditations*." She adds, " but conceptual reform comes hard."
[30] *Ibid.*

ferences between these ontologies. In the next section we will examine two of these differences. In each case, I think Whitehead's philosophy provides the more satisfying account.

V

One significant difference between the ontologies of Polanyi and Whitehead appears in their analyses of performances, or their products, such as works of art, theories, games, etc. As we saw, Polanyi regards performances as comprehensive entities subject to the same sort of analysis as natural entities. Indeed, he judges some performances to have greater reality than natural entities.[31] Whitehead, I suggest, would analyze the meaning of performances as consisting in propositions and their actuality as rooted in the activity of societies of occasions.

Let us take one of Polanyi's own illustrations, a chess game. Whitehead would consider it an event situated in the relationships between two ongoing societies of occasions, the players. However, the game is not actual in the way that the chess board, the chess men and the players are actual. Nor does it enjoy a higher level of reality. Prior to their playing, it was a relevant possibility, functioning as a lure for feeling. While it is played (and afterwards) its reality is rooted in the details of the actuality of the players. Its meaning is a function of the way they include or prehend or objectify the relevant propositions.

We can enlarge the significance of this point by observing that for Whitehead it is finally the individual occasions that are most concrete. Of course societies are real, but their reality depends upon the cohesive relations established among their component and constitutive occasions. It is fundamental in Whitehead's thought " that there is no agency in abstraction from actual occasions, and that existence involves implication

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[31] For Polanyi the reality of something is greater or deeper in proportion to its ability to manifest " itself in yet unthought of ways in the future," *Tacit Dimension*, p. 32. Thus a system of law or a scientific theory would have greater reality than a stone.

in agency." [32] This is for Whitehead the clear meaning of what he terms the " ontological principle." [33] Polanyi seems more Platonic at this point.

The second difference we shall consider relates to the ground for the emergence of the novel and the more complex or higher. Having identified the root process of tacit knowing with the emergence of new kinds of comprehensive entities, Polanyi has on his hands the question of the ultimate sources of innovation both in knowing and being. The clear thrust of previous arguments has been against the adequacy of any reductionistic answer—innovations are not exhaustively explainable in terms of prior components. Sometimes, then, Polanyi seems to suggest that this means there is no further account of emergence. Higher levels in both knowing and being are logically unspecifiable in terms of particulars belonging to lower levels. In each case there is a logical gap which is somehow leaped.

At other times, though, Polanyi utilizes the two notions of imagination and potentiality. Imagination, for instance, is cited in connection with innovations in tacit knowledge. Consider the ability of the human body to correct for left-right inverting spectacles. The adjustment requires time and effort. But it is not an intellectual correction, achieved by means of reversing the visual image. Rather the body responds by a novel integration of the sensory data in which the traditional concepts of left and right are superseded. This bodily adjustment illustrates the dynamic of tacit knowing: " the questing imagination vaguely anticipating experiences not yet grounded in subsidiary particulars evokes these subsidiaries and thus implements the experience the imagination has sought to achieve." [34]

[32] *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 379.

[33] See note 19 above. Oddly, Polanyi also seems to give greater reality to what he calls " meaningless inanimate being " than does Whitehead who would consider inanimate matter an abstraction from component occasions which as such have at least low order meaningfulness. See Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 389.

[34] " Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading," pp. 199-200. Italics deleted.

The key is the striving imagination with its end or aim on the one hand, which evokes the focally unknown subsidiary means on the other hand. However, there seems to be no comparable agency in innovations in being. New wholes utilizing appropriate subsidiary structures seem to emerge spontaneously rather than by imaginative effort. Imagination is only a partial answer.

In both knowing and being there is "a field of potentialities which evoke action." [35] It is these potentialities or final causes which seem to provide the burden of Polanyi's answer. In regard to the process of emergence in both knowing and being, he contends that " the assumption that this process is evoked by the accessibility of the higher levels of stable meaning which it eventually achieves, seems compelling." [36] In regard to what it is that triggers the actualization of this potentiality, he is willing to say only that it may be either " accident " or " the operation of first causes." [37]

It seems to me that to rest with an appeal to potentiality as " evoking " new forms of being and knowing is to rest in incomplete explanation. There are at least two issues which need further attention. One is the source and character of the thrust or urge toward actualization. The other is how potentiality is accessible in an orderly fashion. On these points I think Whitehead's philosophy is both more rigorous and more satisfying.

In regard to the first issue, Whitehead is quite similar to Polanyi in his emphasis upon imagination. For what he calls " appetition," of which imagination would be one species, is basic to concrescence. Each act is synthesized around an aim which functions to evoke and to order the subsidiary means for its achievement. But appetition is itself an illustration of a more primordial notion—what Whitehead calls " creativity."

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[35] *Tacit Dimension,* p. 91.

[36] *Ibid.,* p. 90.

[37] *Ibid.* See also *Personal Knowledge,* p. 384, where he identifies the ground of evolutionary progress as the potentiality of a stable open system.

It is creativity which is descriptive of the ongoingness of the world. It is the principle both of togetherness and of novelty. " The ultimate metaphysical principle is the advance from disjunction to conjunction, creating a novel entity other than the entities given in disjunction." [38] Creativity is not a thing, however, for it has no actuality in itself. It is internal, not external, to occasions. Thus it is actual only through its " creatures "—the constantly emerging occasions of becoming. It is individualized in and characterizes both deity and the world. As a metaphysically ultimate notion, it is " inexplicable either in terms of higher universals or in terms of the components participating in the concrescence." [39]

The second problem is how the order there is in the world is sustained in the midst of change. How is it that novelty is not hopelessly at cross purposes with everything else? In Polanyi's terms, the issue is how relevant potentiality is accessible. Whitehead's answer involves his ontological principle, for by it potentiality must be located or rooted somewhere, in some actuality. This in turn requires " the actual but non-temporal entity whereby the indetermination of mere creativity is transmuted into a determinate freedom. This non-temporal actual entity is what men call God." [40]

Notice that Whitehead speaks of a " determinate freedom." On the one hand, potentiality guides; on the other hand, a range of freedom is preserved for determinations by the individual occasions. This requires that deity function as Whitehead describes—as lure rather than as coercive agent. In Whitehead's system deity is required both as the ground for the ordering and grading of possibilities as well as the agency through which these possibilities are available as relevant lures to occasions. Deity thereby provides the conditions for order as well as for growth in complexity. Apart from some such functioning there seems to be a disjunction of fundamental notions and a consequent fragmentation of explanation.

[38] *Process and Reality,* p. 32.
[39] *Ibid.*
[40] *Religion in the Making* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 90.

VI

Let us sum up. We have explored a number of areas of similarity between the thought of Polanyi and Whitehead. There are other areas, such as Polanyi's notions on the nature of commitment, where the two men seem dissimilar. But the tacit dimension seems fundamental to both. For both philosophers, knowledge always involves a from-to structure, with a large and constantly presupposed subsidiary component. As Polanyi observes, " while tacit knowledge can be possessed by itself, explicit knowledge must rely on being tacitly understood and applied. Hence all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge." [41] And as Whitehead contends, the process constitutive of concrescence is one of integration in which explicit inference plays only a minor role, if indeed it is present at all.

For both, the self is bound to the world by data treated subsidiarily in knowledge as clues to that world. The original of this bond to the world is that enjoyed by the self with its body. In this sense, man is necessarily embodied, drawing the richness characteristic of his experience from the miracle of bodily coordination. Whitehead's concept of causal efficacy expresses this well. Polanyi's extension of tacit integration to cover bodily agency as well as perception enriches Whitehead's thought in this comparison. We can say that for both philosophers one's actions also constitute the shape of his identity rather than being only incomplete embodiments of some hidden self. Embodiedness is a means of expression as well as of reception.

We also saw the concern of both philosophers to provide a comprehensive scheme in which man and his powers are located firmly and yet plausibly within nature. In fact it is the Newtonian legacy of the dichotomy between nature and man that stimulated both to enter philosophy. Polanyi attempts to overcome this dichotomy by arguing that man shares his

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[41] " The Logic of Tacit Inference," p. 144.

tacit powers with animals and that the higher forms of life "may be present in traces long before they become prominent." [42] He is not wholly successful in this effort, however, as his references to "meaningless inanimate being" would suggest.[43]

Whitehead's argument is far more systematic and comprehensive, suggesting that "nature dead" (as studied with concepts reducible to mass in motion) is but an abstraction from "nature alive" (as exhibiting value and aim). This is the point of his contending that actual occasions are descriptive of the most concrete level of existence, no matter what the complexity of actuality in question—"God is an actual entity, and so is the most trivial puff of existence in far-off empty space." [44] And it is within this system of occasions that God is seen to lure ever greater achievements of value, in all parts of nature.

Polanyi's work was first published almost three decades after Whitehead's, so there can be no question of his influencing Whitehead. And Polanyi seems to have arrived at his notions independent of any direct influence from Whitehead. As this paper has sought to establish, however, the parallels between their ideas are strong. Of greater significance, though, is that these ideas are important. In this intensely analytic age, the study of both men deserves and rewards greater attention.

JOHN B. BENNETT

Northland College
Ashland, Wisconsin

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[42] "Life's Irreducible Structure," p. 234.
[43] See note 33 above.
[44] *Process and Reality,* p. 28.

THE THIRD WAY TO GOD: A NEW APPROACH *

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A MONG THE MOST famous unintentional ironies among
the great thinkers we must surely include St. Thomas's
aim, avowed in the prologue to the *Summa Theologiae,*
to simplify theology so as to make it understandable to be-
ginners or novices.[1] For those still wrestling with the problem
of God the irony becomes especially sharpened in the case of
the five ways. Apparently Aquinas was thoroughly convinced
that these arguments, bared to the bone as they are, rationally
establish the existence of God for any open mind ready and
willing to tread the sometimes rough back roads of study and
reflection preparatory to laying hold of the senses of the terms
in the context of what we would call the philosophy and science
of his day. Yet it does not seem extravagent to say that the
proofs that flowed from Aquinas looking so lucid and cogent
elicit in our time as much dissent as assent. After having
patiently retraced Aquinas's steps, some find themselves
puzzled and others baffled by some arguments. Even some
who broadly accept the ways confess themselves confounded
by enigmatic particulars in the proofs. The doctors among
the Thomists also disagree. Two interpreters proud of being
counted thoroughgoing Thomists may affirm the validity of
all five ways but part company on the import and implication
of each of the ways.[2] In recent years the gap between general

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* The substance of this paper was read at the Eleventh Conference on Medi-
eval Studies, the University of Western Michigan, May, 1976.

[1] In the prologue to the *Summa Theologiae* (Madrid: Bibliotheca de Autores
Cristianos, 1961) Aquinas makes it his object as a " teacher of Catholic truth "
to instruct not only advanced students but also " incipientes erudire." By doing
away with barriers that block understanding, he hopes to reach " huius doc-
trinae novitios."

[2] A very curious species of exegesis, it seems to me, is the minority view that
the five ways are really only one way presented in five accidentally different

thrust and particulars of analysis has piqued interpreters of the third way.[3] The move from contingent beings to a per se

logical garbs. This simplistic reductionism flies in the face of the plain, unqualified *littera* of Aquinas in his last systematic presentation of proofs for God in a work of his very late or mature period: ". . . that God exists can be proved in five ways." (*Sum. theol.*, I, 2, 3). The abolition of logically specific differences among the ways also impoverishes the case for a rational theism. This questionable retrenchment leaves only one sector, that of essence and existence,—a metaphysical strand, obscure, if not impenetrable, to many—available as a springboard for the movement of the mind to God. It strips philosophers dealing with God of the analytically and psychologically " most powerful " argument, that of finality, for the existence of God. The *prologus* to the *Exposition on the Gospel of St. John* extols the proof from finality: ". . . et haec est via efficacissima." The way of finality is the most effective in the line of demonstration because the final cause is sovereign among the causes; it is the cause of causes. Happily, as just indicated, here what is most intelligible analytically or *quoad se* jibes with what is the most persuasive psychologically or *quoad nos*. The most compelling argument for God seems to be the most appealing to the mind of the common man. This is probably why, as Etienne Gilson notes, the biblical writers find God glorified in His works. On this point see Gilson, *The Elements of Christian Philosophy* (New York: New American Library, 1963; reprint of what first appeared in 1960), p. 327, n. 2. In Aquinas's prologue this mode of finality, along with three other modes, formally bears on the nature of God but it implicitly proves, as the fifth way does explicitly, the existence of God as the supreme intelligence governing the universe. See *In Joannem Evangelistam expositio* (Parma: Typis Petri Fiaccadori, 1860), X, *prologus*, p. 279.

[3] The third way is of course located in *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3. " The third way is taken from the possible and the necessary, which goes as follows. We find in things certain entities which are possibles able to exist and not to exist: since certain things, we find, are generated and corrupted and as a consequence are possibles able to exist and not to exist. It is impossible, however, that all such beings always exist: because what is a possible able not to exist, at some time does not exist. Hence if all beings are possibles able not to exist, there was at a certain time nothing at all in existence. But if this is true, there would be even now nothing in existence: because what does not exist does not begin to exist save in virtue of something that does exist; hence, if there was nothing in existence, it was impossible that something began to exist and thus at this moment there would be nothing in existence: this consequent is plainly false. Therefore not all beings are possibles: but there must be something necessary in things. Every necessary being, moreover, either has or has not the cause of its necessity from another being. Now it is impossible to proceed to infinity among necessary beings that have a cause of their necessity just as it is not possible among efficient causes, as already proved. Therefore it is necessary to posit something which is per se necessary, a being that does not have its necessity from another but one that is the cause of necessity in others: this being all men call God." In the earlier part of the proof *possibile* is translated in a technically

necessary being seems compelling,[4] but it is not at all clear how contingent beings in nature demand, first of all, a being necessary by another without which they would be annihilated.[5]

Pitching the proof through and through on a metaphysical level, one group of interpreters betrays little perplexity, it is true, in rising from the sheerly contingent to the per se necessary.[6] A contingent being, the argument begins, is one that of its nature draws its existence from, or is dependent for its existence on, another. The attempt to conceive a totality of things

tautologous fashion as a "possible able to exist" in order to underline the fact that the argument builds on the contingent beings we first meet in natural knowledge. A variant reading, "Impossibile est autem omnia quae sunt, talia esse," drops *semper* and alters the translation (of the beginning of the third sentence in the passage above) to read: "It is impossible that all beings be such." This second reading seems less awkward; in any case, its acceptance in a critical edition would not substantially affect the thrust, along with the chief difficulty, of the argument.

    [4] The text of the third way, translated in the preceding note, strictly speaks not of contingent beings but of possible beings. Since the proof starts from beings of nature coming to be and passing away, these possible beings are real possibles or what we may call physical possibles. They exist but they are able to cease to exist; and indeed because of the matter that composes them they are bound to cease to exist. We must sharply distinguish the physical possible from the absolute or logical possible. This latter possibility obtains whenever a predicate is not repugnant or not contradictory to a subject. It is absolutely possible for Socrates to sit down but impossible for him to be at once both a man and a dog. For the physical possible see *Sum. theol.*, I, 86, 3; *Summa contra gentiles* (Taurini: Marietti, 1927), II, 30; and *De potentia Dei* (Taurini: Marietti, 1927), 5, 3. For the absolute possible see *Sum. theol.*, I, 25, 3.

    [5] The contemporary problem with the third way was first raised by Paul Gény, S. J., in "Les preuves thomistes de l'existence de Dieu," *Revue de philosophie* (31), 1924, pp. 578-86. See the fine, comprehensive article of Thomas Kevin Connolly, O. P., "The Basis for the Third Proof of the Existence of God," *The Thomist* (17), July, 1954, pp. 286-87. As Fr. Connolly shows, pp. 284-85, all of the older commentators, evidencing no awareness of any aporia or lacuna, passed over the third way with a minimum of comment. A number of recent responses to the problem, none of them altogether unsatisfactory, are surveyed on pp. 287-99.

    [6] See Gerard Smith, S. J., *Natural Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 125-27. Joseph Owens, C. Ss. R., *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1963), pp. 347-48, uses roughly the same approach. R. Garrigou-LaGrange, *Dieu: son existence et sa nature* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1933; 6th edition), pp. 269-70 takes a similar exclusively metaphysical tack. It may be safely said that a good majority of the scholastic manuals of this century substantially agree with this straightforwardly metaphysical interpretation.

made up of only contingent beings fails. Such a universe would literally come to nothing for the contingents would simply be without any not-from-another source of existence. From another angle, a universe made up of all contingent beings could never even come into existence. Hence there follows the irresistible conclusion: there must be a per se necessary being. Clad in even this abbreviated garb, the argument is impressive and strikes some as absolutely coercive. In this context, however, it seems saddled with one major shortcoming: however apparently forceful, it is simply not identical with the third way of St. Thomas. Aquinas starts with physical possibles as his *explicandum*: these are what first call for some necessary being in nature, presumably one whose necessity is derivative. The proof that we have summarized transposes the original data, beings composed of matter and form or physical possibles, into what we may label metaphysical possibles,[7] beings composed of essence and existence. Having altered the starting-point, this approach is bound to alter the precise point about the hypothetical annihilation of a purely contingent universe. As we shall see presently in more detail, Aquinas argues that if no necessary being existed, already existing contingents would have been annihilated. Yet this significantly modified version reasons that if no necessary being existed, nothing would have come into existence. Metaphysically neater and tighter, this recasting of Aquinas's third way requires fewer causal assumptions and smoothly outflanks the most formidable difficulty. Unfortunately, to repeat, it suffers from one liability: it is specifically different from the third way, it is a restatement that radically changes the third way.

Like the other ways to God, the third way, while formally metaphysical, is foundationally physical.[8] It begins with data

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[7] We are employing the term "metaphysical possibles" only in the loose or extended sense, since Aquinas ordinarily confines the acceptation of real possibles to generables and corruptibles.

[8] Because man is a being of nature among other beings of nature, because the proper object of the human intellect is material or sensible being (*Sum. theol.*, I, 84, 7), natural philosophy must precede metaphysics in the order of learning.

from medieval natural science, the fundamental sectors of which we call today philosophy of nature. The third way starts from beings that come to be and pass away, whose continued existence is inexplicable without some necessary being. To put this in more detail but still broadly, the third way divides into two parts. Part I moves from physical possibles to some necessary being. Part II moves from a being necessary by another to the being necessary of itself that is God. Part II iterates under the rubric of necessity notions that bulk large in the first and second ways. A being necessary by another must have its necessity caused by another, and we cannot conceive of an infinite chain of essentially related caused necessary beings: so we must posit a being whose necessity is uncaused. Assuming that the reasoning in part II is sound, we may focus attention on part I, which subdivides into four parts. (1) Nature contains physical possibles, corruptibles, each of which will in time pass away. (2) If only physical possibles exist, then at some time nothing exists. (3) If at one time nothing exists, nothing would now exist.[9] (4) Since the consequent of (3) is false, some necessary being must exist. Propositions (2) and (3) in the *modus tollens* syllogism are interlinked. The denial of the consequent of hypothetical proposition (3) entails the denial of its antecedent. Now the antecedent of proposition (3) is identical with the consequent of proposition (2): its denial carries with it the denial of the antecedent in proposition (2). The implication in proposition (3) seems unchallengeable: from nothing nothing comes. But the reason for

In librum Boethii de trinitate, quaestiones quinta et sexta, ed. Wyser (Louvain: E. Nauwelaert, 1948), 5, 1, ad 10. Since the science of being psychologically rests upon and derives from the general science of mobile being, arguments purporting to prove that God is, in the broad sense, the author of nature must take as their starting-point the findings of natural philosophy.

[9] *Sum. theol.*, I, 2, 3. ". . . if all beings are possibles able not to exist, there was at a certain time nothing in existence. But if this is true, there would be even now nothing in existence: because what does not exist does not begin to exist save in virtue of something that does exist; . . . thus at this moment there would be nothing in existence: this consequent is plainly false. Therefore not all things are possibles. . . ."

the passage from antecedent to consequent in proposition (2) appears dark and elusive. It is not at all clear why a world made up of only physical possibles would have to collapse into complete nothingness. The basis for this flatly asserted entailment is then a crux or perhaps the crux of the third way. If it defies explanation, if all solutions only issue in insoluble paradoxes, then the third way would seem to break down beyond repair on its physical-foundational side.

Some Thomists of stature maintain that the obscure entailment implies an infinite time during which all merely contingent beings would go out of existence. Fr. F. C. Copleston writes: ". . . if time is infinite and if all things are capable of not existing, this potentiality would inevitably be fulfilled in infinite time."[10] Etienne Gilson concurs in essentials with Copleston: ". . . if . . . merely possible from all eternity, there must have come a moment when a thing ceased to exist. But this applies to all merely possible things, singly and collectively."[11] However, even granted the plausible but unverifiable hypothesis of an infinite time, it seems doubtful that an unending string of generations and corruptions would "inevitably" evacuate the universe of all possibles. The number of individuals in any species is potentially infinite because the primary matter in which all forms are subjectified is pure potency, i. e., a potency for any and every form, a materially infinite capacity for new forms.[12] An infinite time is paralleled and matched by the infinite potentiality that is primary matter. However far the time-line is stretched, there are always new generables arising out of the old corruptibles within the com-

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[10] F. C. Copleston, *Aquinas* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 120.

[11] Gilson, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[12] In *The Five Ways* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 65, Anthony Kenny argues that we are guilty of the quantifier-shift fallacy, i. e., of false generalization, if we think of primary matter as common to all substantial changes. But surely if primary matter is sheerly undifferentiated and underlies any one substantial change taken as typical, it must underlie all other substantial changes. Kenny's objection savors of quibbling, since he immediately drops the point and continues to concede, as he does elsewhere throughout, that it is not fallacious to regard primary matter as the substratum common in all substantial changes.

mon substratum that is neither generable nor corruptible. According to Fr. Thomas K. Connolly, a physical possible cannot continue in existence over an infinite span of time.[13] Since a corruptible being that never was corrupted in an infinite duration would have to be actually, really incorruptible, its potency for being corrupted has to manifest itself in an infinite time. It is undoubtedly true that any one possible must be corrupted in an infinite time,[14] but it seems false to leap to

[13] Connolly, *loc. cit.*, pp. 331-32. The passage from *In de caelo*, I, l. 26, n. 2 that he summarizes on pp. 333-34 goes no farther than establishing that a possible, if it is really per se corruptible, must corrupt at some time. Only by false generalization can we move from the inescapable corruption of one contingent to the utter destruction of all physical possibles. The text from *In de gen.*, I, l. 7, n. 6, quoted on p. 334, n. 59, is mortal to the infinite-duration option, for it makes clear that generation and corruption would go on endlessly in a cosmos perpetually in motion.

[14] Kenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63 puts this argument of Aquinas down as fallacious: ". . . it makes use of *ab esse ad posse valet consequentia*, which as we have seen holds only for logical possibility. There is no reason why there should not be something which exists for ever without having the power to exist for ever; beings perhaps kept in existence, like the Vestal Virgins' fire, by powers resident in a succession of external agents. Such a thing might very well have the power not to exist, for all Aquinas' argument shows." Unfortunately, this rather subtle objection seems open to rejoinder on more than one count. First, the *ab esse ad posse* formula is not limited to logical possibility. It is solidly established as a working rule of all experimental sciences and practical sciences like engineering and medicine. Because we have observed the explosive character of TNT in the past, we take precautions against the real possibility of a future explosion. After illicitly dismissing *ab esse ad posse* as a merely logical dictum, Kenny incongruously invokes logical possibility to counter the inevitable corruption of a physical possible. Indeed there is "no reason why" a physical possible may not exist forever in terms of absolute or logical possibility. A human body can exist forever, not on its own resources, however, but through the extrinsic power, as Christians believe, of grace or glory *(De pot.,* 5, 3, ad 8). But in terms of its ontic character or nature, a physical possible has to corrupt over an infinite time. Its nature—especially its material component—makes it an *intrinsic* possible or contingent: it is so intrinsically determined that it cannot go on existing forever. As the old scholastic dictum has it, " Operation follows upon nature." Apart from a miracle, a thing by and large has to behave according to its nature. Wherever modern thought drops the concept of nature, the lines between intrinsic (physical) and extrinsic (logical) possibility tend to be blurred. Thus we should not be altogether surprised that some philosophers hold that machines can strictly and formally think, and we may surmise that other thinkers are capable of defending the views that tables can talk, that shrimps can whistle, and that chimpanzees, if properly encouraged

the further conclusion that thereby all physical possibles must be corrupted in an infinite duration. In an endless duration generation and corruption go on endlessly. An infinite time does not exist all at once but segment by segment. Correspondingly, in each time-segment new physical possibles are aborning out of the old. An infinite time then cannot account for the contrary-to-fact annihilation of all possibles hypothetically bereft of the support of some necessary being, for primary matter is as perpetual as the hypothesized infinite time itself.

We may now venture a fresh line of analysis in the hope of locating in the proof itself some guiding-thread that may help point the way out. One such clue may lie in Aquinas's apparently casual but actually significant mention of beings that are necessary by another. A necessary being is one that cannot be otherwise; once launched into existence, it cannot not exist.[15] Human souls and angels or separated substances naturally come to mind; their separated or separable natures resistant to all natural destruction guarantee their status as necessary beings.[16] But Aquinas also makes room for a sort of ontic hybrid among necessary beings. These are the heavenly spheres and bodies composed of a fifth or quintessential element called ether. Though material, they are considered incorruptible and there-

and educated, can master calculus. With the loss of the concept of nature or intrinsic determination, anything goes.

[15] The main texts are: *Cont. gen.*, II, 30, and *De pot.*, 5, 3.

[16] *Sum. theol.*, I, 50, 5; 75, 6. Kenny, *op. cit.*, p. 63 disputes the indestructibility of necessary beings: " By an interfering agent a substance can be corrupted before the time natural for things of its kind to cease to exist, as a man can be cut off in his prime. Hence it is not true that what has the power to exist forever necessarily does exist forever." Chance or another countervailing agent can destroy a being of nature before its life has run its course. But precisely because they are spiritual and therefore necessary beings, substances like human souls and angels transcend the material determinism that makes corruption inevitable, however long or short the actual life-span. No material " interfering agent " can snuff out the existence of subsistent forms whose non-material nature guarantees that they cannot not exist. Yet it remains true in terms of logical possibility and extrinsic potency that they would cease to exist if the external conserving power of God were withdrawn (*De pot.*, 5, 3, ad 8).

fore necessary.[17] The causally and spatially interlocked spheres
terminate in a top or controlling sphere, the outermost sphere,
called the *primum mobile*.[18] This first moving cause within the
world of matter we may name the universal physical cause.[19]
It is a physical cause; it is within nature, though, as we shall
see, dependent upon finite causes outside nature. It is a uni-
versal cause or a universal *in causando*, a cause extending to a
plurality of special effects.[20] It is an equivocal cause, one not
limited to a homogeneous range of particular effects. Ordinarily
the causes we observe in our experience are univocal causes,
whose influence is confined to individuals within one species;
peaches grow from peach seeds, dogs give birth to puppies, and
so on. An equivocal cause affects a variety of species and in-
dividuals.[21] " Man and the sun generate man " runs one medi-
eval physical dictum that goes back to Aristotle.[22] The sun,
viewed as an equivocal cause, indirectly causes generation,
supplying the light and heat without which generation would
be impossible.

Leaving aside for the moment problems raised by an out-
moded celestial physics, we may sketch four reasons why a
universal physical cause—a material but necessary being, a
being necessary by another—seems demanded by some general
features of the natural universe. The need for a universal phys-
ical cause seems dictated by the inherent inadequacies of agents

[17] *Ibid.,* 66, 2; 75, 6. *In Aristotelis libros de caelo et mundo,* ed. Raymond
Spiazzi, O. P. (Taurini: Marietti, 1955), I, l. 7, n. 7. See Thomas Litt., O. C. S. O.,
Les corps célestes dans l'univers de saint Thomas d'Aquin (Louvain: Publications
Universitaires, 1963).

[18] *In duodecim libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio,* ed. Raymond Spiazzi,
O. P. (Taurini: Marietti, 1950), XII, l. 7, n. 2529.

[19] This term was coined, I believe, by Charles De Koninck, an outstanding
philosopher of nature of Laval University, Quebec, who passed away in 1965. I
have been unable to locate exactly where it appears in his works.

[20] *In octo libros physicorum Aristotelis expositio,* ed. P. M. Maggiolo, O. P.
(Taurini: Marietti, 1954), II, l. 6, n. 3.

[21] *Sum theol.,* I, 13, 5, and *ibid.,* ad 1.

[22] *In phys.,* II, l. 4, n. 10. The Latin Aristotle reads: ". . . homo enim hominem
generat ex materia et sol " (II, c. 2, 194b14). Also, see *Sum. theol.,* I, 12, 5 and
In librum de causis expositio (Taurini: Marietti, 1955), l. 5, n. 143.

subject to generation and corruption. On their own, univocal causes are not enough to account for the production of substantial changes and for the maintenance of species that outlast their individual instances. More particularly, their shrunken individuality, the limitation of their causality to accidental effects, their alterability, their corruption—these characteristics of univocal agents militate against the occurrence of substantial change without the overriding influence of a universal physical cause.

First, every second around the globe finds a myriad of new animals springing into being.[23] Yet the conception of, say, a horse is not adequately explicable by the proximate natural agents to which it is imputed. No doubt the parents are the per se cause of this horse, of the horse taken precisely as an individual. But they do not generate the nature of the horse. For to credit them with the entrance into being of the specific nature of horse means making them co-causes of the existence of every horse and therefore of their own existence. A horse that causes the equine species itself is necessarily the cause of its own coming into being—an event plainly impossible. Thus univocal causes in nature seem ineffectual without a higher equivocal causality. Over and beyond the proximate agents sharing in the nature of horse—or, for that matter, of any species—there must be a universal physical cause that makes use of the predisposing operations of univocal agents to generate new substances.

Secondly, the narrow causal range of univocal material agents yields a like conclusion.[24] No univocal agent exercises its causality immediately in virtue of its substantial form; it acts in virtue of its special potencies or active qualities. These proximate sources of action are of course limited to effects in their own mode; they can do no more than modify entities in the line of accidental change. Their effects are the alterations

[23] *Sum. theol.,* I, 104, 1.
[24] *Scriptum super libros sententiarum,* ed. P. Mandonnet, O. P. (Paris: Lethellieux, 1929), IV, d. 12, q. 1, a. 2.

that predispose toward substantial change; they bring their causality to bear not on the form but on the matter of the receiving entity. The whole of nature is a theatre of incessant substantial transformations only materially ascribable to the univocal agents in the foreground. Hence a higher equivocal cause is required to effect what causes circumscribed within the accidental are powerless to achieve.

Thirdly, univocal agents, whether elements or complex bodies, labor under still another handicap.[25] Because their form does not completely dominate their material component, they are entities not only altering but alterable, mortally exposed to crippling variation and destruction in their impact on the contrary qualities of other bodies. Thus, insofar as their actions tend to be resisted, perhaps neutralized and overcome, by contrary qualities in the patient, inferior agents are totally ineffective; they are of themselves impotent to achieve results in the line of accidental causality. That their efficacy is not so nullified, that they actually do, in spite of the contrariety of patients, reach their causal objectives must be then attributable to a higher physical cause, one that alters without being altered: the universal physical cause. It communicates to inferior agents a share in its unalterable status; it equips participating causes to maintain their substantial cohesiveness; its conserving and concurring action, imitative of the divine, enables inferior agents to check and defeat countercausal factors in their field of operations.

Lastly, the fact that a species survives the corruption of any individuals actually comprising it points to the need of a universal physical cause.[26] The cycle of generation and corruption in any one species is inexplicable by the species itself. For the species exists concretely only in its individual exemplifications, and these particular portions of the species are plainly

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[25] *Ibid.*, II, d. 13, q. 1, a. 3, ad 9. For the texts in this and the preceding two footnotes see Joseph LeGrand, S. J., *L'Univers et l'homme dans la philosophie de saint Thomas* (Brussels: Desclée de Brouwer, 1946), I, pp. 116-62.

[26] *In meta.*, XII, l. 6, nn. 2510-2511.

subject to generation and corruption. The endurance of a species and indeed the quasi-perpetuity of some can be accounted for only by a cause that itself outlasts the flux, that is in some way quasi-perpetual: this is the universal physical cause.

A basic axiom like " Omne vivens ex vivo " seems to spell trouble for the all-encompassing efficacy of the universal physical cause. Though presumably a nonliving entity, it superintends and exerts a decisive influence on the production of living things. But we can save the proportionality of causes by qualifying the received formula to read: " Omne vivens ex vivo aliquo modo." In addition, here we must not forget that the universal physical cause is a moved mover: it is *primum* but it is also *mobile*. It is the instrument and transmitter of the influx of a higher power. This higher cause is an extracosmic agent belonging to the order of created separated substances. Its spiritual impress enables the primary cosmic agent to bring about the production of living things. This spiritual agency exercises only an indirect and mediate influence, across and through the instrumentality of causes composed of matter. Yet this causation from the outside, it may be noted, is extranatural in only one respect. In every other respect it is natural: the presiding end, the order of instrumental causes, and the material matrix are natural.[27]

Once we have accepted, at least provisionally, the existence, cosmic efficacy, and quasi-perpetual invariance of the universal physical cause, we are no more than a step or two away from overcoming the crux. We come to the verge of understanding that its removal would issue in the total elimination of all beings of nature.[28] Suppose that the universal physical cause

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[27] *Sum. theol.*, I, 65, 4; 44, 3, ad 2. See LeGrand, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 162-83. See also James A. Weisheipl, O. P., " The Celestial Movers in Medieval Physics," in *The Dignity of Science*, ed. Weisheipl (Washington, D. C.: Thomist Press, 1961), pp. 185-90.

[28] Guy Jalbert, O. M. I., in his excellent *Nécessité et contingence chez saint Thomas et chez ses prédécesseurs*. (Ottawa: Editions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1961), pp. 225-28 stresses the need of " an adequate agent " for the production

drops out of nature or has its efficacy utterly suspended. First of all, univocal agents would not be able to overmaster the countervailing factors capable of nullifying their accidental causality. The stoppage of accidental causation brings with it the stoppage of substantial change and, in company with this, the end of all fresh generation. Where all new generation is terminated among beings of nature bound to be corrupted, the inevitable extinction of all beings of nature is simply a matter of time: the whole of nature is thus determined to collapse into nothingness.[29] But a second line of argument, concentrating on the impact on species, may prove more illuminating. Only a top equivocal cause, we saw, can exercise control over the species of horse or over any species. Remove the universal physical cause, and it becomes impossible for any new being of nature to spring into existence. Remove the primary cosmic agent, and all generation comes to an instantaneous halt. We may take a final step. Not only the generation of specified individuals but the continuance in existence of any and all species depends on the universal physical

of a new form out of matter. But failing to specify any such adequate agent, he devotes no attention to the role of some necessary being in nature. As a consequence, he never gets around to pinning down precisely why the cessation of the operation of the adequate agent that we have called a necessary being in nature would precipitate the annihilation of the cosmos. Weisheipl, *loc. cit.,* p. 164 remarks upon the derived necessary beings operative in the third way. " Similarly the argument from possible and necessary beings includes not only terrestrial necessities and contingencies, but also the sempiternal celestial bodies and spiritual substances, which are radically necessary beings." However, the purpose of his article probably prevents him from clarifying these " terrestrial necessities " or setting down detailed reasons why the cosmos would come to nothing at the moment " radically necessary beings " were removed. Father Emmanuel Gisquière's *Deus. Dominus* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1940), I, p. 182 (which came into my hands only recently) accurately discerns the role of celestial bodies " quorum influxui tribuebatur generatio corruptibilium ac specierum conservatio." Unfortunately, he lets the solution slip through his fingers since he sees no way of maintaining a cosmic necessary being apart from an exploded view of celestial matter. Since modern science has done away with quintessentially composed celestial bodies, we must discard, he implies (falsely, I believe), any serious case for a necessary being equipped to cause generation and conserve species.

[29] *In Aristotelis libros de generatione et corruptione,* ed. Raymond Spiazzi, O.P. (Taurini: Marietti, 1952), I, l. 7, n. 3.

cause. Suppress this primary physical cause, and all species immediately cease to exist. Since form is the determining principle in any species, the disappearance of species carries with it the withdrawal of all forms. With the vanishing of forms, primary matter cannot remain, for in itself it is pure potentiality, devoid of all act. Existentially, it is always joined to form as the determinable receptive subject within things. Stripped of all forms, primary matter is pure potency. Since only the actual can exist and since primary matter is in itself actually nothing, the departure of all forms leaves nothing actual at all in the physical world. To be sure, primary matter is ingenerable and incorruptible, but it manifests these attributes only in union with forms. It is the unchanging substratum, the unvarying continuum, underlying all transformations so long as forms are there to determine it. Banish all forms, and matter amounts to nothing. In itself it remains ingenerable and incorruptible, and even a hypothetical removal of all forms cannot corrupt matter. Rather, it is nothing-ed, its existence is canceled, it simply ceases to be.[30] Perhaps an example may clarify this. Imagine that all six life-supporting elements vanish; all life would come to an end. Imagine further that all the other elements drop out of nature; then only free-floating sub-atomic particles would remain. Imagine, finally, that all sub-atomic types also go under; in this last stage effectively nothing would remain. In Aquinas's outlook the elimination of the universal physical cause accomplishes all three of these stages at a stroke, leaving nothing actually physical behind. Suppose that at this very instant the universal physical cause ceased to exist or was rendered inoperative. In

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[30] *In meta.*, II, 1. 4, n. 328: ". . . ipsi infinito, quod est materia, convenit ipsum nihil, quia materia secundum se intelligitur absque omni forma." According to Fr. Connolly, *loc. cit.*, p. 342, a matter that is *secundum se* incorruptible and goes on infinitely would be a necessary being. But matter in itself is neither a necessary nor a possible being. It is, strictly, not a being at all but a principle of being. Though it is incorruptible in itself, it is not a necessary being, for with the cessation of all forms it would indirectly go out of existence. Matter is not a possible being but the permanent principle of all possibles. Unlike possibles, it cannot directly corrupt; like possibles, it can cease to exist.

a flash everything in the physical universe would collapse into utter nothingness. The cosmos would not be just blown to bits or disintegrate into loose clusters of sub-atomic dust. It would not just sink back into a formless stuff resembling some primordial chaos. Everything would go, not a bit or speck would remain: there would be nothing, absolutely nothing at all.

Once we grasp the central role of equivocal causation in Aquinas's general physics, the crux becomes a key, the sense of incomprehension brooding over the proof evaporates, and we see the parts of the puzzle fall nicely into place.[31] When we look about, Aquinas says initially, what greets our eyes is the domain of physical possibles, the realm of ceaseless generation and corruption. This univocal-causal activity is directed, facilitated, and sustained by higher equivocal causes, and the whole complex is governed by the universal physical cause. In a second step Aquinas bids us conduct a simple thought-experiment. Think away the equivocal-causal apparatus, especially the top cosmic agent, and hypothecate that nature contains nothing but physical possibles. At the instant the universal physical cause disappears, the whole of nature vanishes with it into absolute nothingness. Why this instantaneous annihilation? Each of the univocal causes closest to our observation is only a *causa fiendi,* a cause of the becoming of things. Each is only a cause able to affect no more than the accidental qualities and features of things. Stallion and mare are responsible for the thisness of the colt but not for its horseness or equine nature. An equivocal cause is *causa essendi* or *causa secundum esse,* a cause of the being of natural entities.[32] (*Esse* here evidently signifies the substance or specific stuff of things, since the causation of the *esse* that is the act of being

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[31] Aquinas's equivocal-causal strategy also quashes the charge levelled by Kenny, *op. cit.,* pp. 56, 64, that, in passing from the unavoidable corruption of one possible to the hypothesized corruption of all possibles, the argument becomes crippled by the quantifier-shift fallacy or its equivalent, more commonly designated false generalization.

[32] *Sum. theol.,* I, 104, 1.

is properly reserved to God alone whose essence is subsistent existence.[33])   When the equivocal-causal machinery is dismantled, all the natural *esse* or being of physical possibles, all the substance and specific stuff, goes out of existence. Forms, the determinants within species, lose their causal support and thus stop informing matter. Matter deprived of all forms becomes actually nothing. In a word, when the causes of substances and species cease to exist, not a single natural species and substance can exist any longer: there remains nothing, nothing at all. But the universe is plainly not a void but a plenum of species and substances. Besides the univocal causes or physical possibles then there must exist some equivocal cause or necessary being able to cause substance and sustain species through the unceasing generation and corruption of individuals. In part two Aquinas takes us beyond beings necessary by another to the one being necessary per se. We need not tarry over this, since this is not our chief business. It suffices to note that it is impossible to go on to infinity in an essentially ordered series in any line of causes. A chain of caused causes, no matter how long, must always hang on and start with an uncaused cause, in this case the being whose necessity is per se or uncaused.[34]

[33] As *In sent.*, I, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 notes, *esse* is an analogous term, signifying not only the act of being but also the quiddity (or nature) of a thing. *In phys.*, IV, l. 20, nn. 2, 10 assigns a fourth acceptation to *esse*: it may mean the duration or temporal span of a being of nature. *De pot.*, 3, 7 and 7, 2 prove that *esse* or existence is the proper effect of God.

[34] For a forcible rejection of the infinite regress see G. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-07. Vincent E. Smith shrewdly proves the physical impossibility (an infinite space and infinite time) of an infinite regress in *The General Science of Nature* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1948), pp. 375-77. To counter the rigorous move to a per se necessary being Kenny, *op. cit.*, p. 69, proposes what can only be described as a specious objection. " If the first part of the Third Way has force at all, the matter of an everlasting world would be matter with a natural power of everlasting existence." The " force " of the third way stems from the constricted causal efficacy of possibles composed of matter and form. True, matter is incorruptible or naturally everlasting but only as the consequence of being purely potential or utterly formless. The necessity of matter is bought at the price of being actually nothing: as the least sort of being, matter is the most dependent

Now that we have set the third way against a general physical background that permeates Aquinas's thinking, some of the irony remarked at the outset seems muted. Anyone acquainted with the physical picture of the day, Aquinas rightly expected, would have little trouble in reading between the lines of his proof. But the physical setting that softens the irony may magnify the difficulty of its contemporary acceptance. Apparently, the more we understand the proof, the less satisfied we are with it—it seems tied too closely to an irremediably shattered world picture. The disintegration of its original concrete integuments, however, does not essentially affect the need for a universal physical cause. It may indeed savor of the genetic fallacy to insist that the philosophically viewed structures of equivocal causation be discarded along with now dead associated notions that it is only linked to by historical accident. The concept of a universal physical cause remains intact amid the fluctuations of experimental science, no more open to discard than is the soul-body composition in man or the general hylemorphic make-up of beings of nature because of the overthrow of the ancient theory of the four elements. As long as new things come out of old, as long as the cycle of generation and corruption goes on, the reality of substantial change is undeniable. To account for the whole complex of substantial change, the mind is compelled to affirm a top equivocal cause equipped to bring about what lies beyond the scope of univocal agents, potent enough to insure the continuance of species amid individual departures and arrivals and to furnish the efficacy for transformations. In epistemic lan-

entity in the universe. In contrast to the per se necessary being that is sovereign, primary matter is ontically the most inferior entity in nature. If it is impossible that anything come to be from absolutely nothing, it seems similarly impossible that all form and determination flow from what is actually nothing and sheerly indeterminate. In effect, Kenny identifies pure potentiality with pure act. It is interesting to note that Aquinas uses rather strong language to characterize the medieval holder of a like opinion: David of Dinant, he says, "most irrationally (*stultissime*) maintained that God is primary matter" (*Sum. theol.*, I, 3, 8). Kenny's view is of course not altogether the same; he holds that we can reasonably consider primary matter to be God.

guage, the notion of a universal physical cause belongs to philosophy of nature which focuses on the general or fundamental features of the physical world reached prior to specialized scientific probings.[35] Because attained prior to and independently of particular observations, the basic theses and general conclusions of philosophy of nature cannot be undermined or eroded by modern scientific advances. The concept of universal physical cause is a physical concept, but it is a philosophical-physical concept. It is not derivative from or geared to special experimental observations. It is, rather, solidly based on observation prior to all special scientific techniques. It is analyzed out of the common and universal fact of substantial change that modern physics presupposes rather than supersedes. In short, the universal physical cause is part and parcel of a general or fundamental physical philosophy that is not observationally or analytically dependent on the sometimes shifting ground of contemporary physical research. Thus the third way has a firm general-scientific or natural-philosophical physical structure resistant to the attrition of any fresh scientific breakthroughs.

A certain obscurity undoubtedly still lingers about the proof. However luminous we take the universal physical cause to be in clarifying the crux concerning the annihilation of possibles, its modern use carries with it one dark spot: we are not able, and probably will never be able, to put our finger on the universal physical cause. We cannot look to the specialized sciences, as Aquinas did, to pinpoint its residence, its specific nature, and its proper attributes. In addition to those who reject the equivocal-causal apparatus central to the third way,

[35] See *In phys.*, I, l. 1, n. 5. Since general is achieved prior to particular knowledge, a mistake in particular or specialized scientific endeavors cannot retroactively nullify the previously acquired general knowledge. Suppose that after encountering a former friend whom I have not seen in ten years, I cannot recall his name: this fact does not cancel out the two prior cognitive facts that I know him as a man and recognize him as a former acquaintance. Similarly, the analyses and conclusions of philosophy of nature or the general science of nature cannot be overturned or vitiated by novel hypotheses or discoveries in the specialized sciences that we today label the natural sciences.

some who accept the proof as technically demonstrative may
judge it psychologically or pedagogically cumbersome, i. e., too
tortuous, too slippery, too overlaid with subtle physical pre-
suppositions to elicit conviction and assent in others. But if we
do, for whatever reason, shelve the third way, there are still
available other pathways of contingency to a per se necessary
being. One of the simplest and most direct of these bypasses
the tricky equivocal-causal route.[36] Briefly, this argument,
which some may deem an abridged and modified version of the
third way, runs: physical possibles, since they can either exist
or not exist, must have their existence caused; their existence
must be caused by some necessary being, which cannot not ex-
ist, and since there can be no infinite regress, we come ulti-
mately to a per se necessary being. A searching analysis of
course would have to be made of the initial data to establish
that physical possibles bespeak an existence that is caused.
Thus any inadequacy, whether analytical or pedagogical, in
the third way does not automatically annul other proofs, some
strictly metaphysical, seeing in the sheer contingency of things
a demand for a per se necessary being causing all contingents
and all other necessary beings in the universe, a being " that
all men call God." [37]

JOHN M. QUINN, O. S. A.

Augustinian Historical Institute
Villanova University
Villanova, Pennsylvania

[36] *Cont. gent.*, I, 15. In the context of this *caput* the argument for God as the
per se necessary being is the first main stage in proving that God is eternal.

[37] *Sum. theol.*, I, 2, 3.

ORIGINAL INNOCENCE IN A PASSIONATE UNIVERSE: THE MORAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF CAMUS

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THE DRAMATIC WORLD of Albert Camus, like the Christian world to which Camus was the disaffected heir, is populated by strangers: men and women estranged by their reason from nature, from other human beings, and even from themselves. In the crisis Camus calls the ' absurd,' the crisis in which he locates the mystery of human estrangement, we recognize a secular counterpart of a central Christian doctrine, the fall of man. More surprisingly, Camus's account of this crisis corresponds in remarkable psychological detail to one particular version of the fall: that forged by St. Augustine through a fusion of Biblical themes with the philosophy of Plotinus. The rest of Camus's plot of the human drama—primitive ' innocence ' before the absurd, exile and return to the kingdom following the crisis—shows similarly detailed likenesses to the treatments of Plotinus and Augustine.[1]

What could account for such remarkable similarities in a twentieth-century author to thinkers who lived more than fifteen-hundred years before? Clearly the enormous impact of Augustine and Plotinus on all subsequent Western European thought explains a great deal. I hope to show in this paper that there is a more methodical reason: an assumption common to Camus and to the Plotinian-Augustinian tradition concerning the nature and function of human reason. Plotinus and Augustine explicitly lay the foundation of human alienation in an epistemological theory of what constitutes a rational ex-

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[1] Camus often expressed a sense of the sacred in the universe; but he cherished no hidden convictions on pre-existence, immortality, Neoplatonic hypostases, or God. This paper seeks resemblances only within human experience.

planation, a theory that will be called the thesis of heterono-
mous explanation. In Camus, as in the two earlier thinkers, hu-
man alienation from our world and ourselves arises largely—
not solely—from an incongruity between reason and reality. In
describing this estrangement, Camus unmistakably displays
every symptom of holding this same thesis of explanation. If
he does so understand the nature and role of reason, we have
not only a rationale for an otherwise remarkable parallel be-
tween theories, particularly concerning the central moral crisis
of humanity, but also a helpful instrument for interpreting
Camus's work, both philosophical and fictional.

This paper will attempt to point out the parallels between
Camus and the earlier two thinkers, to describe the tradition
of heteronomous explanation found in Plotinus and Augustine;
to show that Camus did, in fact, hold this view of the nature
of rational explanation; and to trace the connection between
this thesis and the complex of factors, passionate, intellectual,
and moral, set forth in Camus's account of the ' absurd.'

By way of restrictions, I do not claim, among other things,
to present a definitive, or a best, method of interpreting Camus.
I shall not attempt to trace the path through which Plotinus
and Augustine came to influence Camus.[2] I cannot develop
completely the themes ascribed to Plotinus and Augustine:
their views can be sketched in only lightly as points of de-
parture and comparison.

Similarly I shall not try to analyze the entire human drama
as seen by Camus. Aside from necessary references to other
episodes in the plot, I shall confine this paper to the ' absurd '—
the ' fall "—and its immediate antecedents and consequences.
This theme Camus treats particularly in two works, *Le Mythe
de Sisyphe* and *La Chute*. I shall concentrate most heavily on

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[2] Camus wrote a thesis dealing with Plotinus and Augustine, *Métaphysique
Chrétienne et Néoplatonisme*, for a diploma in *études supérieures*, printed in Camus,
Essais, ed. by R. Quillot, Pleiades edition (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), pp. 1220-1313.
The influence of Plotinus and Augustine on Camus, however, was undoubtedly
produced first more indirectly through the tradition of the great French moralists,
particularly Pascal.

the *Mythe; La Chute* will be mentioned only briefly as a co-
herent treatment of a problem left unresolved in *Le Mythe*.

Explanations: You Can't Get There from Here

What Camus's convictions about reason evidence in common
with those of Plotinus and Augustine can be summed up in
what might be called the thesis of heteronomous explanation.
The thesis is based upon the conclusion that, since deductive
reasoning involves a set of necessary connections, the same
kind of necessary relations must be found in the objects of the
reasoning. In addition, in establishing these necessary rela-
tionships, reason unifies a variety of different conclusions in
a few general principles; and the objects, by hypothesis, must
be capable of this unification. For similar reasons change must
be excluded from the objects of reasoning since it does not
seem compatible with the necessity of the relations.[3]

Thus the world of sensuous experience is explicable, if at
all, in terms only of something, real or mental, entirely external
to that world, something that owns in itself the requisite
qualities of necessary, unified, and unchanging relations. The
explanation of material entities and actions must be sought
outside those entities. Material objects themselves must be
regarded as a kind of epistemological zero, as the confluence
of intelligibilities entirely external to themselves. And so the
thesis of heteronomous explanation might also be called the
thesis of the epistemological null point.

This explanatory process, then, resembles nothing so much
as a " commonsense " explanation of a photograph. If there
are men or rocks in the picture, the photograph itself does
not acquaint us with such entities. We have to bring that
knowledge to the picture. If the picture acts on us, it acts not
as a photograph but as a piece of paper and bits of silver com-
pound, each of which presumably acts in the same way (e. g.,

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[3] The method of ' explanation of the epistemological null point ' is here attributed
to Plotinus rather than to Plato because Plotinus diminishes considerably the
Platonic confidence in reason, replacing it by reliance on the supra-rational, a
reliance that is in the end a mark of heteronomous explanation.

by reflecting light) within the photograph as it does outside it. If the photographer wants to convey some "meaning" to us, the "meaning" has its source in the mind of the photographer. It is reconstructed, approximately, by the mind of the viewer. Aside from these sources outside itself, the photograph is a mere spatio-temporal heap, and even what is heaped is alien to it.

Plotinus, in fact, so regards the material world. Speaking of matter in Plotinus's system, Camus accurately refers to it as "this great pauper, this affirmative nothing"; and he quotes Plotinus's claim that matter never takes on actual form but only a reflection: "If it is in act, it is an apparition in act, a lie in act, or, so to speak, a true lie, an authentic non-being." [4] There is, to be sure, an order in the appearance of the apparitions, in the stately repetitions of the stars, in the yearly round of the seasons. But no reasons for that order can be observed in, or rationally extracted from, the appearances themselves. Plotinus escapes by claiming that the natural order has its true origin—and the human reason has its true object—in the intelligible complex of multiplicity-in-unity that constitutes the *Nous*.

By way of contrast, there did exist in Greek philosophy a tradition—that of 'autonomous explanation'—based on the conviction that material entities and, in a modified way, actions of those entities, possess within themselves an intelligible principle, called a *physis*. This tradition, found in varying degrees in Aristotle, the Epicureans, and the Stoics, contends that the mental grasp of the *physis* constitutes the primary sort of explanation. To know a horse is to know its *physis*, which every horse really has. And to reason about horses involves relating that *physis* to other aspects of the horse, for example, to its behavior.

This thesis of 'autonomous explanation' aspires to intellectual accomplishments less ambitious than does that of explanation in terms of outside forces. Though it strives, as any

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[4] *Métaphysique*, p. 1282.

rational scheme of explanation must, to clarify and unify the obscure and infinitely complex world of experience, still the program of autonomous explanation professes to find intelligibility precisely in that world. It has to abandon, accordingly, the goal professed by a scheme of heteronomous explanation, the goal of absolute clarity and absolute unity in an explanatory principle; instead it settles for a remainder of obscurity and multiplicity of intelligible sources—even to the extent of recognizing a multiplicity of methodical approaches to understanding. And if a system of autonomous explanation professes to arrive at the reality of some supra-sensible being, e. g., Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, it does not claim, as does the system of heteronomous explanation, to understand the sensible world in terms of this transcendent reality; rather the transcendent is understood in terms of the sensible.

Meeting the Absurd

Although almost all of Camus's serious (i. e., non-journalistic) work either deals with the experience of the absurd or at least takes for granted that experience as a starting point for the reconstruction of human life, the *Myth of Sisyphus* embodies his first explicit—and his most detailed—description of the crisis. Since this work is also quite clear on most of the epistemological and psychological parallels with Plotinus and Augustine, a brief summary of the section called "Absurd Walls " will be helpful.[5]

The *Myth* deals with the problem of suicide: of whether suicide is the proper response to a life seemingly drained of meaning by the absurd. Having raised this question, Camus proceeds to describe the experience of the absurd, to discuss false escapes from the dilemma it propounds (generally in the form of sacrifices of intelligence on the altars of an irrational faith) ; and to propound his own suggestions, if not for solving the problem, then at least for living with it.

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[5] *Le Mythe de Sisyphe,* reprinted in *Essais,* pp. 89-211. Translations of the *Myth* here usually, but not always, are those of Justin O'Brien. References are to the French text.

The awareness of the absurd, Camus declares in the section, "Absurd Walls," emerges in the first place, not from our minds but from the depths of our passions. Great feelings create " an exclusive world in which they recognize their own climate," a " metaphysic and an attitude of mind." [6] The awareness of the absurd is no exception.

The awakening can come of the most trivial beginnings: the futility of the weekly round of working, eating, sleeping, working; the realization that the hope of a better tomorrow locates us at a specific point on the limited arc of time that forms our life and leads inevitably to the day when there are no tomorrows; a glimpse of the strangeness of the non-human world and its alienation from human thoughts and desires; the momentary impact, accompanied by an existentialist nausea, of seeing another, perhaps in a telephone booth, as an automaton driven by some obscure train of gears; and, finally, the certainty of death, a certainty made bearable only by the fact that we know it statistically, not by experience.

But the absurd has an intellectual as well as a passionate side. The very first distinction of true and false gives birth to logical paradox, a warning of what lies ahead. To understand, for a human being, demands that all things be unified,[7] that the world and its relations be clear, and that they be marked with the seal of the likeness of man and his thought. These demands, however, contradict themselves. Parmenides insisted that the " all " is one, and in that very insistence differentiated himself as thinker from the " one " he thought about. In particular, I do know that I am, but a knowledge of what I am evades me. The most I can do to approach that knowledge is to cite a finite number of aspects I can manifest—and of these aspects there are an infinity. Socrates's " know thyself " amounts to a mere nostalgia, mixed with a confession of ignorance.

I know, besides, of the world of trees, of water, and of all nature. But the attempt to explain it by dismantling its mechanism through reductionist science ends in a picture of miniature solar systems—an artistic image, not an explanation.

⁶ *Mythe,* p. 105.   ⁷ *Ibid.,* p. 110.

Thus intelligence itself denies the claims of naïve reason to know the world. Intelligence itself proclaims the absurd: the irreconcilable confrontation between the longing for clarity in the human heart on the one hand and a world that denies those longings on the other. We are bound to our world not by unity but by opposition.

Camus concludes, revealingly, that the human mind makes an all-or-nothing demand for explanation. We are clear, however, about nothing but the walls that bar us from clarity about the world.

What Reason Doesn't Do

The clues in this section of the *Myth* point to the conclusion that, although Camus may be trying to track down a *physis* internal to the world and the entities within that world,[8] his conception of reason is entirely within the Plotinian tradition. To grasp a *physis*, if such a grasp is indeed possible, belongs not to reason but to some other aspect of the human person. Reason, according to Camus, encounters the world, other human beings, and even the self as strangers. The reasons for this estrangement become clear in light of the conception of reason that Camus shares with Plotinus and Augustine.

What leads us to suspect a Plotinian hiding within Camus's absurd? First of all, the demand for unity. If we do indeed long, as Camus says, for absolute unity in explanation—if the search can be satisfied only in a unique principle that can embrace the " shimmering mirrors of phenomena " and the eternal relations between those phenomena—then somehow the unity for which we thirst must be outside the multiple phenomena. Camus may speak in *Noces* of finding in the world the unity for which Plotinus longs,[9] but the unity cannot be identical with the multiplicity it unifies—not rationally at least.

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[8] Cf. Champigny, Robert J., *A Pagan Hero*, tr. by R. Portis, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), for Meursault's search for a *physis* in *The Stranger*. Camus claims the reality of a common human nature in *L'Homme Révolté*, in *Essais*, p. 425.

[9] *Noces*, in *Essais*, p. 75.

Then there is the call for clarity, a call that has special resonances with the tradition of heteronomous explanation. Camus himself uses the word " clarity " in a variety of senses, which he relies on the context to distinguish from each other. He speaks, for instance, of clear descriptions, of clarity in reasoning (which does not necessarily bring with it clarity about the results), of clearness concerning the walls that limit reason. By clarity as an ideal of the mind, however, he seems to mean complete intelligibility in the objects of thought: complete comprehensibility in the irreducible element (or elements) of thought; a transparency to the intelligence in the necessary relationships that bind together parts of the universe and that form the basis of human judgments and reasoning. And this demand is distinctively Plotinian. A logic (or autonomous explanation) that begins with the inherent, though imperfect, intelligibility of individual material entities will undoubtedly try to deal wth relationships between those entities as adequately as possible; but its expectations will be moderated by the possibly contingent nature of those relations—and especially by the limitations of reason's own point of departure, i. e., finite, multiple, changing objects of experience. The dream of clarity as an indispensable condition of thought can come true only in a world completely divorced from the one we experience.

Similarly Camus proclaims that to understand the world is to reduce it to the human. It is not clear whether he means this reduction to human dimensions as a descriptive generalization (i. e., that all views of the world so far do in fact involve humanized projections) or as a categorical norm (i. e., that a world view, for some a priori reason, must contain such projections) . The conviction, in any case, reflects a tendency to impose on the world an intelligibility alien to that world, again the central demand of heteronomous explanation.

Camus at last cries passionately: " I want everything to be explained to me or nothing." [10] Human thought has its faith, a faith that truth is so interrelated that every part de-

[10] *Mythe,* p. 117.

pends on the totality, the totality on every part. A universe where this is the case differs vastly from the world of experience, where relationships take only the easily splintered form of similarity, of spatial nearness or farness, of repeated sequences of before and after.

These last two characteristics, the " humanness " of the object of reason and the " all-or-nothing " demand for knowledge, have some strange consequences. We shall see them again.

A more complete comparison between the views of Camus and those held by Plotinus and Augustine would certainly turn up many points concerning the adequacy of knowledge in relation to the world on which Camus would be strongly opposed to Plotinus and his Christian heir. Plotinus and Augustine, for instance, held firmly to the belief that the structure of human consciousness and of its demands provides a key to the ultimate constitution of the universe. One sure sign of Neoplatonic influence is the use of the axiom, " Nature desires nothing in vain " ; if the mind longs for absolute necessity and unity, there must be something in the universe that can satisfy that longing. It is at least partially in response to this conviction that Plotinus postulates the existence of the World Soul, the *Nous*, and the One, that Augustine claims God must exist. On neither of these claims was Camus willing ever to follow their lead. The human mind may demand such necessity and such unity; but for Camus, this presumption in no way indicates anything answering to such longings in the world. The desires of the mind, for him, are in vain.

Philosophers would be happier if Camus himself had provided us with a more extensive analysis of reason and its functions. From the characteristic demands he makes on human intelligence, however. it seems safe to assign him to the Neoplatonic camp. What remains is to see how this view of intelligence provides a coherent rationale for other features in his description of the absurd. Two questions suggest themselves: What light does this view shed on the complex of characteristics that Camus presents in *The Myth of Sisyphus* as

traits of the absurd? And, supposing the story of Jean-Baptiste Clamence in *The Fall* to be a version of the same experience, does this account of reason help to explain the differences between the two versions?

Heteronomous Reason and the Absurd

In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, as I claimed earlier, the description of particular characteristics—of events and their interconnections—in the experience of the absurd follows a pattern parallel to that found in Plotinus and Augustine. In addition to the search for intellectual absolutes, absolute unity, absolute necessity, absolute clarity, in explanations, the following elements seem central: (1) the priority of the passionate experience over the intellectual experience of the absurd, (2) the part played by the passionate construction of " metaphysical " universes in the crisis, (3) the parallel of the intellectual experience of the absurd with the prior passionate experience and the connection with the absurd of a typical set of intellectual dualities or oppositions, and (4) the identification of this emotional-intellectual conflict with a moral crisis—in fact, with the central moral crisis of human life. Discussion of a fifth similarity, the role played in the crisis by a " false, godlike self," I will postpone until later; this presumption is only ambiguously present in the *Myth*, but Camus recognizes its crucial importance in later works, particularly in *The Fall*. There are other detailed similarities, less important, that will emerge as corollaries of these five central parallels.

Camus, it is true, simply describes the crisis of the absurd. He does not claim that there is some logical coherence among its parts. But I do not think we can entirely content ourselves with accepting the sequence as purely descriptive. That assumption would not account for the similarities between Camus's account and those, not only of Plotinus and Augustine, but also of a whole tradition of mystical and moral writers. If Camus, moreover, simply describes his own experience, the account might be of some pathological interest, but it would

be unlikely to apply to a universal human dilemma, as Camus seems to claim.[11] Finally, a description always involves a point of view; thus the question: What was Camus's point of view?

Because I am going to consider these questions from the standpoint of a set of assumptions about reason, I will consider first the intellectual aspects of the absurd. Although this arrangement violates the order in which Camus describes the absurd as experienced, I believe it is possible to reconstruct Camus's order out of the intellectual difficulties.

A Puzzle About Explanations

As a prelude it might help to recall one of the standing perplexities with which the thesis of heteronomous explanation has had to contend. The difficulty, on the abstract level, is this: whatever the outside source upon which we depend for our understanding of a physical entity, that source cannot share the traits of the physical entity without embarking on an infinite regress of explanations. And if it does not share the traits of the physical entity, it is impossible to see what it is that we understand about the physical entity once the explanation has been made. Moreover, since this non-experiential source of experienced entities is invoked as necessary to explain the occurrence and characteristics of those entities, we arrive at the interesting circle, intellectually at least, of a natural entity that is understood in terms of a transcendental principle that is, in turn, understood in terms of the natural entity. The difficulty can be made more concrete by substituting " horse " and " transcendental source of our understanding of horse " in the appropriate places in the preceding argument. The difficulty may not be insuperable, but everyone who works within the theory of heteronomous explanation must take steps to solve it.

To this problem Plotinus adjusts himself by proclaiming, for one thing, that horses are not worth worrying about because

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

they are not real, only shadows of the real; for another he insists that it is possible to know the *Nous*, the intelligible source of the shadow-horse, as something more than the projector of shadows. St. Augustine, in a more difficult position since he cannot claim that God created an unreal world, nonetheless argues that horses would be unintelligible to us except for an internal divine light, an act by which God produces ideas of material entities in our minds. Camus lives in a somewhat Augustinian world without hypostases, God, or interior divine light to appeal to.[12]

As its most important consequence, however, the objection underscores the bifurcations that the method of heteronomous explanation introduces, not only between mind and body, but also between one human being and another, between intelligence and emotion, and even between different aspcts of intelligence itself. In this light we will discuss Camus's description of the absurd.

The crisis of the absurd itself for Camus stands as a dividing line that creates one of these bifurcations. He seems to postulate a state of innocence before the experience as contrasted with an awareness of evil afterward, an awareness that inevitably involves us as accomplices in that evil. Further the absurd has its birth in an eruption of consciousness—perhaps it would be clearer to say self-consciousness—in which we first become aware of the difference and confrontation between the self and the world.[13] And this in turn involves the dawning of the opposition between the self as knowing and the self as known. This sequence corresponds in detail to Adam and Eve's loss of innocence through eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, at least as Augustine interprets the story.[14]

As a result of this self-awareness there comes to light on the intellectual level a discrepancy within the intelligence itself:

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 111.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 107.
[14] *City of God,* especially Book XIV, chs. 11-14.

a discrepancy between the goal of intelligence and its accomplishments. The intelligence seeks, for Camus as for Plotinus and Augustine, to understand everything in a single principle. In fact it remains mired in the realm of the multiple. Nor does this gap exemplify only the common human failure to live up to our aspirations: the intelligence creates multiplicity in the very act of postulating unity. This is the reasoning behind Camus's example of the Parmenidean "One," which the mind affirms only by simultaneously asserting its own difference from the One.

This apparently strange difficulty only repeats, in a specific way, the more general problem encountered above: that in a system calling for heteronomous explanation the explanatory principle can have nothing in common with the entities to be explained. The effort to grasp some kind of absolute unity in the same sort of conceptual process as that involving the various subordinate unities proceeding from that absolute is, therefore, doomed in principle. The only way to "know" the One would be, as Plotinus saw, through total absorption in it,[15] a development that would spell the end of individuality and individual thought. The only path by which reason can attain its objectives, as those objectives are spelled out in the tradition of heteronomous explanation, leads in the end to intellectual suicide.

The very demand for unity out of which the difficulty grows, it must be recalled, itself emerges out of the Plotinian method. The claim that human intelligence always demands absolute unity is not self-evident; neither is it substantiated by the reports from Camus and from other thinkers, no matter how numerous, that they desire absolute unity in thought. Considered as universally true, it can only be a conclusion. And, in the West in any case, it seems almost always to be deduced from a method that, encountering multiple unities, demands that they be explained from outside themselves, i. e., by an absolute unity.

[15] *Enneads*, VI, ix, 10.

The other aspect of Camus's problem of the absurd, on its purely intellectual side, falls into place rather easily. Once we have described how the reason works, or at least how we suppose it works, there is no real difficulty about why the world of experience is not intelligible. It is unknowable by hypothesis. Camus's account of his dissatisfaction with the scientific account of the world really adds nothing: it simply establishes that reductive science is one variety of heteronomous explanation. Division of wholes into parts and parts into their parts can theoretically go on to infinity.

Similarly with my knowledge of myself: if I am considered as a material entity, I am, like all such objects, unknowable by definition. By reflecting on my " conscious self," I succeed only in turning myself into part of the problem. And if I regard myself as a union of body and conscious self, the union, as Augustine pointed out, has the characteristics of neither one and is more mysterious than either of its components.[16]

Passion Goes First

So far we have been viewing the problem as a purely intellectual one; we had to do so because it is in the rational method involved in the intellectual problem that we are trying to find a key to the other aspects of the problem. But if only a set of intellectual conundrums were concerned, Camus would not have been interested. " If I ask myself how to judge that one question is more urgent than another, I reply that one judges by the actions it entails. I have never seen anyone die for the ontological argument." [17] The quest involves passion. Not just any passions either: the problems revolve not around whether I should choose a career as a scientist or a news editor, but around the very value of life itself: " To determine whether life is worth, or is not worth, the trouble of remaining faithful to it, that is to answer the basic question of philosophy. All

[16] *City of God,* XXI, 10.
[17] *Mythe,* p. 99.

the others—whether the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories—merely follow. They are only games. What is important is to answer the first." [18]

Where passions and knowledge are both concerned in the same action, in the Neoplatonic tradition, the passion leads; knowledge follows—it would almost be correct to say that knowledge mimics—the passion: "The regularity of an impulse or a repulsion in a soul is encountered again in habits of doing or thinking, is reproduced in consequences of which the soul itself knows nothing." [19] Camus could have proclaimed on his own behalf the words he quoted from Plotinus: "Desire impels us to discover universal being; this desire is the 'Eros' that leads to the door of its beloved." [20]

This priority has already been mentioned, but a closer look is called for. On what basis do the representatives of this school of thought claim that it is passion, rather than some other factor, that guides intelligence?

For one thing, it is simply a matter of experience. A child observably desires what is necessary to life—food, warmth, security—before it understands these needs; and the same desires continue to dominate actions even after understanding develops. [21] Camus finds himself torn by the conflicts of the absurd on a passionate level before he analyzes the intellectual aspects. (In fact, if the intellect alone were involved, the crisis would be confined almost entirely to those with a rather complicated education.) St. Augustine, Camus recalls, although intellectually convinced of Christianity, continued to be dominated by his former habits of life and could not accept Christianity until the moment of an emotional "illumination." [22]

For another thing, there exists among human beings, not one universal view of what the world is like, but a considerable

[18] *Loc cit.*

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

[20] *Métaphysique*, p. 1283, quoting *Enneads*, VI, v, 10.

[21] *Mythe*, p. 102.

[22] *Confessions*, VIII, 1; also: "Noli quaerere intelligere ut credas, sed crede ut intelligas." *In Joan. Tract.*, 29, 6.

number of such views. Even if we suppose, as do Plotinus and Augustine, that there is one and only one true view, how is it possible to account for the others? If Plotinus and Augustine are correct in saying that the One or God is the focus of all reality, what has happened to all the human beings who believe, or at least act as if they believe, that the material world is the only reality that counts? The distinguishing feature, upon examination, seems to be a matter of love. Most of us, according to Plotinus, are unable to achieve philosophical wisdom because we are too attached by love to the body and its intense pleasures. The City of Man, for Augustine, differs from the City of God because it issues from a kind of love—by what Scripture calls love of the flesh, which under Augustine's closer examination turns out to be more precisely a love of self-glorification, of domination.[23] A picture strikingly like Augustine's turns up in Camus's *The Fall*. The question, after all, concerns views of the world as the arena of human action, of what we want and what we do not want. Such arena cannot be subjected to intellectual analysis before it exists as an intellectual object; and, by definition for the process of heteronomous explanation, the material world in itself does not form an intelligible object. A universe in which material entities have value, in which they are desired or feared, must theoretically precede any attempt to grasp the world intellectually.

Finally there is the problem, only implicit in Camus, that reason on Plotinian grounds cannot furnish its own first principles. The difficulty has to do, not primarily with procedural principles like the principle of non-contradiction, but with the content of what we think about—principles known prior to ratiocination and invoked as its premises. Without them, as Aristotle pointed out, we can never know that conclusions drawn from the reasoning are true. By fiat, for the process of heteronomous explanation, such principles can be drawn neither from the sensible world, which is precisely what must be explained, nor from absolutes (such as the One) apprehended

[23] *City of God,* XIV, 28.

by reason, since the reason, as we have seen, annuls such absolutes in the act of apprehending them. Theoretical attempts to solve the problem—such as Plotinus's union of the contemplative soul with the One, Augustine's divine illumination, or Kant's transcendental categories—fail to explain satisfactorily the role, if any, that reason plays in practical knowledge, in directing our lives.

Thus passion precedes reason and furnishes it with its principles: a world of values must appear antecedent to the eruption of self-consciousness that Camus calls the absurd. And this world extends its tentacles to every corner in the realm of experience, relating objects to the central desire that engenders this world, giving them their meaning, their value, their interconnections. " Great feelings," says Camus, " take with them their own universe, splendid or abject." [24] If reason finds an object before self-consciousness begins to erect its walls, it is such passionate universes and their interconnections that provide this object. And the absurd exists because this primitive passionate universe—what Camus calls a " metaphysic "—begins to collide, at first glancingly, later violently, with aspects of the world, the self, and other human beings, with facts that the passionate universe had previously accommodated only by ignoring them.

The existence of such passionate, metaphysical universes would explain the claim that an emotional and intellectual loss of direction in the absurd takes on a third dimension of a moral crisis . . . rather, of the moral crisis.

We should note that the word ' moral ' is used here in a sense different from Camus's. He uses it to refer (a) to theories that ' good ' and ' bad ' are objective characteristics, prior to human desires, and (b) to the formal rules presumed to guide us in living by those objective values. Camus's absurd seems to have the function of showing that these beliefs have no basis, a conclusion with which, if the material world alone were concerned, Plotinus and Augustine would concur. I am using the word

[24] *Mythe*, p. 105.

' moral ' here, however, in the sense of the conscious effort to create values that we can use to give our lives basic direction. And this struggle, whatever word may be applied to is, does occupy the central place in Camus's work.

The " metaphysical universe " before the absurd does contain value; in fact its whole organizing principle is a value introduced by desire. But the value is subhuman. It is not yet value originating from self-consciousness; and without self-consciousness Camus believes nothing has really human value. But the passionate universe alone introduces the question of values into the absurd; the other factors only call those values into question. Because the values concern the very worth of life, the crisis of confronting them with meaninglessness is the fundamental moral question of human life.

The First State of Life: Innocent or Sinful?

Camus, in The Myth of Sisyphus and other works of about the same time, seems convinced that there exists in human beings before the experience of the absurd a genuine state of natural innocence, blissful though subhuman—and doomed. What kind of innocence? For Camus, the silent love between mother and child, the ecstasy of absorption in natural beauty, an immediate delight in fulfilling the longings that a vigorous life sends through the body. " In Algiers, to the young and vital everything is a refuge and a pretext for rejoicing: the bay, the sun, games on the red and white terraces overlooking the sea, the flowers and stadiums, the cool-limbed girls." [25] The world of these innocents is created for them by their desires; they simply search to fill their needs. Morality and religion are for the aged, too burned out to feel either the desires or the joy in satisfying them.

"Burned out"—that is the future and the problem for this innocence, or anyway one of the problems. " They start work very early and exhaust the range of human experience in ten short years. A workingman of thirty has already played all his

[25] *Noces,* p. 68.

cards. He waits for the end with his wife and children around him." [26] Still to come is the abandoned loneliness of an old woman fumbling with her rosary and looking emptily at a painted statue. Or the old man telling dull stories of past exploits to young men who want only to escape to the beach.[27]

This is the idyll of spontaneous, if temporary, delight that Camus sees as plunged into the depths of the absurd. The germs of its downfall, to be sure, already infect it. We are not " a tree among trees, a cat among animals "; [28] human beings have intelligence, and with intelligence comes the appetite for the absolute and for unity. Somehow—just how will later become clearer—we must assume that those demands are being met in the unreflective paradise of youth. The plunge that ends the idyll is precipitated by self-consciousness: by a comparison between the expectations that light up innocence and the facts of the day-to-day life in which these expectations are frustrated. The metaphysical universe of the happy youth comes into conflict with the facts of a boring job, the realization that tomorrow may not be better after all, the certainty of death. In this experience whatever is truly human finds its origin. " Man's greatness," as Pascal said, " comes from knowing he is wretched; a tree does not know it is wretched." [29]

Here, however, Camus seems to have parted company—and rather precipitously—from the Neoplatonic tradition. The fall, the experience of the absurd, constitutes for Camus an individual event. In the Neoplatonic-Christian tradition, the fall precedes individual lives. For Plotinus, the fall is the inevitable condition under which any soul binds itself to a body. And for Augustine, of course, it was the original sin, an offense that since has poisoned at its source the life of every human being. From this divergence develops a second: Camus, as we have seen, apparently believes in a period of genuine, if evanescent, innocence before the absurd; Plotinus, Augustine,

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[26] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[27] " L'Ironie," *L'Envers et l'Endroit*, in *Essais*, pp. 15-20.
[28] *Mythe*, p. 136.
[29] *Pensées*, n. 397 (Brunschvicg).

and the whole tradition that follows them, in postulating an abdication of integrity preceding individual bodily lives, leave no room for any such period of original innocence.[30]

The first difficulty does not seem to be insurmountable. The universal fall in Plotinus and Augustine should be paralleled, at least sometimes, by a corresponding moral crisis on the individual level. In order to become a philosopher, Plotinus's human soul must first become aware of " the shame of the things it now honors." [31] And for Augustine, there must be an eruption of consciousness—a personal realization of the " knowledge of good and evil "—that occasions the inevitability of personal sin in addition to original sin. These individual crises correspond to Camus's experience of the absurd.

The second problem might be accounted for by the fact that Camus rejects the philosophical and theological presuppositions on which rests the conviction of the " corruption "— or at least the misdirection—of human beings from the beginning of life. He does not accept, as does Plotinus, the pre-existence of the soul; he does not believe in a transcendent God, without whom Augustine's account of original sin loses its plausibility. But the problem is more complicated than that.

The ' Self ' Made God

The epistemological system of Plotinus and Augustine, apart from any considerations of pre-existence or of a personal God, seems to demand the creation of a kind of false self as part of human development. And this self is a godlike self. To it everything else in human experience is subordinated. Out of this godlike self arises human misery.

The logic by which this apotheosis of the self comes about is clear enough. In the Plotinian tradition of rational explanation, passion precedes reason. And this passion, being the source

[30] For the Neoplatonists the attraction of the soul to the body is not a matter of guilt; but it does involve the direction of the unreflective human life to fictitious goals.

[31] *Enneads,* V, i, 1.

of the orientation of the intelligence toward the absolutes, must already incorporate the absolute in its actions. Further, to the extent that any kind of objective direction is possible to these primitive desires, this direction comes only from sensations, and the objects of these sensations derive their definition and value from the desires. Other human beings, at this level, are no more than sensory objects among the other entities of the world; like these other entities they are given meaning by becoming objects of desire.

Thus the very first universe in which a human being dwells is structured by a passion that is at once self-directed and characterized by a thirst for the infinite. This primordial impression can only be reinforced by the spatial structure of the world, which is centered for me on the precise point from which I see, I hear, I sense that world. If this first metaphysical universe contains a self, as it must since it is founded upon a self, then that self like the rest of the metaphysical universe is a construct of our basic drives. And as the center of the world, it serves a godlike function in the universe of meaning.

If the experience of a world centered around a godlike self were a purely intellectual one, it could be expressed something like this: my " self " constitutes the goal from which all other things have their value. The components of the world minister to my desires, and I define them in terms of my desires: food for my hunger, parents for my care, games for my victory; everything is to be manipulated for my enjoyment. I am the Alpha and the Omega.

Thus there arises a universe, and a self, that is at once the outcome of an unconscious clarity, a cosmic mistake, and a moral monstrosity. An unconscious clarity because the creation of this universe grows out of a longing truly—and inescapably—present in human beings and because its creation precedes any self-conscious thought. A cosmic mistake because I am not God and have distorted the face of the entire world. A moral monstrosity because I not only make myself a hell for others but also alienate myself from myself. This fictional face,

created by a re-enactment of the Narcissus myth, is the false
self that forms a recurring theme in the writings of Western
mystics: when they tell us we must lose our " selves," they
are talking about this concocted mask. It is the object of a
vicious, because misdirected, love that must be reoriented be-
fore we can become truly human. In this false face of the self,
there is no correspondence to reality—even to a real self.

Whether arrived at by this process of analysis or not, there
is no doubt that Plotinus and Augustine agree on the existence
of this false " self." In Plotinus the real " self " is directed
toward the One; it is toward the One that the desire for the
absolute points. Love directed toward the bodily human being,
toward a mere image, falsifies itself. For Augustine too, the
serpent in Eden states the crux of the problem: " You shall
be like gods." Citizens of the Earthly City are doomed to the
service of a self that is not even a real human being, much less
the most important being in the universe.

But does Camus agree that, before the crisis of the absurd,
the " self " does assume such a false, godlike role? Or is that
self, for him a real innocent, doomed perhaps, by the tragedy
of life and the fictions of society, but nevertheless possessed
of a personal integrity and a unity with the natural world?

If the drama of the absurd were played out solely on the
intellectual plane, Camus's agreement with the Neoplatonic-
Augustinian tradition would be obvious. If I claim, intellec-
tually, to be God, what would I be doing in a humdrum job,
I who created the world? If I am God, how can my life be
confined to a finite arc over which I have already traveled much
of the way? How can that existentialist " other," even confined
in a telephone booth, be so cut off from me that I, the source
of his being and activities, do not know why he is acting as
he is? If I am God, why should I not have already obtained
the Plotinian ideal of all knowledge seen in one principle—
cited by Camus as the summit of intellectual joy? " I want
everything to be explained to me or nothing," cries Camus. But
omniscience is the province of God.

No such purely rational account of the absurd is possible. And Camus does not, either from a personal or a logical point of view, present such a description in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Such a direct intellectual confrontation between a claim to be God and the denials of reality would be possible in principle only to the insane. Accordingly, Camus in the *Myth* assumes, as we have seen, a state of fragile innocence prior to the absurd.

In the tradition of Plotinus and Augustine, the belief in a godlike self can be understood only in terms of the priority of the passionate over the rational. Only in a universe constructed by passion can the " self " claim to be God and assert divine demands. And this much Camus understood even when he wrote the *Myth*. When the Emperor Caligula, in the drama written shortly before the *Myth*, openly insists on divine pre-rogatives, his mistress responds: " But that's madness, sheer madness! " [32] The source of the conflict with the experienced world is not an intellectual claim to be God, but a pre-rational insistence, imbedded in the passions, on having my universe revolve around me.

This passionately contrived false face, moreover, possesses an extraordinary ability—as might be expected—to survive through any number of intellectual universes. Augustine, among his original insights, pioneered in uncovering the ruses through which, in his own experience and in various political and philosophical systems, the search for godlike domination persists through intellectual changes.[33] One of the functions of the mask is to protect itself. To do so it must disguise first of all its own identity. The dissonance, therefore, can become conscious only on the passionate level of disparity between expectations and facts. Transposed to the intellectual realm, it appears as a divorce between our metaphysical universe (in Camus's sense) and the observed world. These are the chasms Canus describes with acuity in the *Myth*.

[32] *Caligula,* in Camus, *Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles d'Albert Camus,* ed. by R. Quillot, Pleiades edition, (Paris, Gallimard, 1962), p. 27.

[33] *City of God,* XIV, 6-9.

Should Camus in the *Myth* have recognized the seeds of corruption in human beings even in the time of primitive " innocence " ? That would be asking too much. Camus had read Plotinus and Augustine for his dissertation only a few years before writing the *Myth*. He surely appreciated the coherence between the problems they raised and the solutions they offered. And that may have been just the difficulty: Camus could not accept the solutions. In both, the way out of human troubles that in this world could be found only by translation to a world in which there are no troubles. Plotinus's " flight of the alone to the Alone," Augustine's community of the elect in heaven, might provide theoretical solutions, but only at the expense of stripping us of our humanity; the view that the human condition from the beginning was infected by love of an illusion seemed to leave room only for such solutions. And if the solutions repel us, in Camus's eyes, so much the worse for the problems.

Even in the *Myth* and other works of the same time, however, Camus shows signs of recognizing the problem in terms suggested by Plotinus and Augustine. The ways of living with the absurd suggested in the *Myth*, although Camus maintains they preserve our proud insistence on unity, involve in fact a retreat from the absolute: the absurd man attempts to recover his own *physis* by immersion in multiplicity and through a kind of mystical identification with the inanimate world. The only unity he finally finds consists in accepting the unity of his own life.[34] And in *Caligula*, the Emperor, though he does not enter it that way, emerges from the experience of the absurd as a horror. But the claim that makes him a horror, the claim on the absolute, is not merely a result of the absurd, it is its indispensable ingredient. Finally there is Camus's own cry: " I want everything to be explained to me or nothing "—the cry of a human being or a would-be god?

In another article I hope to point out that, by the time he wrote *The Fall*, Camus had come to agree with the pessimism

[34] *Mythe*, p. 169.

of Augustine's pronouncement, "No human being is good." The grotesque figure of Jean-Baptiste, protagonist of *The Fall*, raises that pessimism to the dimensions of a myth—a myth that identifies Clamence with Satan and thereby incorporates the " fall " with a primitive evil lurking from the beginning in the tragedy of individual lives.[35] The " innocence " of Clamence before his encounter with the absurd, an innocence very much like that of the young men and women on Algerian beaches in Camus's early work, is infected through and through with the kind of self-idolization that constitutes the state of original sin for Augustine, the misdirection of the embodied soul before its conversion for Plotinus. " I was always bursting with vanity," declares Clamence. " I, I, I is the refrain of my whole life." [36] And it is only by deliberately electing to go on serving this false god-self—this time self-consciously—that Clamence becomes the incarnation of evil, the Manichean reverse image of the good God.[37]

Nor is this infection of self-worship portrayed as unique to Clamence. Camus incarnates in his judge-penitent a tendency he considers universal to all human beings. " We are in the soup together," says Clamence; and the story loses its point unless he is right.[38] Out of this realization, Clamence has constructed his own hell. But hell, for Camus as for Dante, furnishes the only door to the kingdom—on earth or in heaven.

Escaping From Hell

For from this hell there are exits, as, even in the pessimism of *The Fall*, Camus himself recognizes. Even reason has its function in our escape: at least by helping to point out the incongruity of our " false face," it can aid us in discarding our first, misleading passionate universe. Through examining

[35] For Jean-Baptiste Clamence as Satan, see F. W. Locke, " The Metamorphoses of Jean-Baptiste Clamence," *Symposium*, XXI, 4 (Winter, 1967), pp. 306 ff.

[36] *La Chute*, in *Théâtre*, p. 1500. Quotations from this novel follow closely the translation by Justin O'Brien in Camus, *The Fall* (N. Y.: Vintage, no date).

[37] *La Chute*, pp. 1548-49.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 1547.

others, it can serve as a guide to a " right " passionate universe. But in the long run the escape from hell is effected, not by reason, but by love. We shut ourselves up in a dungeon through a false love; through a correct love we can make our way out.

For Camus at different times in his life, love seems to dictate different paths of escape. In the *Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Stranger*, the love of physical beauty leads to a kind of natural mysticism, closely akin to the love of the beautiful that serves as the beginning of wisdom for Plotinus. For Camus in *The Rebel*, love of the dignity of all human beings, however vaguely realized, moves us to rebellion, an act that proclaims and makes explicit the universality of human nature. And in *The Fall*, even Jean-Baptiste Clamence evokes again and again the " holy innocence " of those who forgive—forgive themselves and others too—the theme that judgment and justice can be brought to their knees before mercy. Camus, as opposed to Plotinus and Augustine, wishes to find his kingdom in union with the *physis* of the world of experience, not by escape into another, transcendental realm. But like others in the Plotinian tradition, the road to his kingdom may only be indicated through reason. It is traveled through love.

EDWARD T. SMITH

University of Denver
Denver, Colorado

ERIC VOEGELIN'S THEORY OF REVELATION

 confused

I N VIEW OF the intensity, as well as the frequently non-
rational character, of both political and religious com-
mitments, a writer who would attempt to explore these
areas and to raise reflection on them to the level of genuinely
theoretical understanding would have to be courageous—willing
to endure unreasoned reactions, as well as to face clearly and
take account of reasoned criticism. That Eric Voegelin's studies
of the history of order in several of the major civilizations of

Abbreviations of the works of Eric Voegelin cited in the text:

BOOKS:

Anam.	Anamnesis: Zur Theorie der Geschichte und Politik (Munich: R. Piper & Co., 1966).
FER	From Enlightenment to Revolution, ed. John H. Hallowell, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1975).
NSP	The New Science of Politics: An Introduction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).
I	Order and History: I. Israel and Revelation (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1956).
II	Order and History: II.. The World of the Polis (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1957).
III	Order and History: III. Plato and Aristotle (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1957).
IV	Order and History: IV. The Ecumenic Age (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1974).
SPG	Science, Politics, and Gnosticism: Two Essays (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1968).

ARTICLES:

" GC "	" The Gospel and Culture," in Jesus and Man's Hope, vol. II. ed. D. Miller and D. G. Hadidian, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Press, pp. 59-101.
" IES "	" Immortality: Experience and Symbol," Harvard Theological Review, 60, n. 3 (July, 1967), 235-79.
" RCE "	" Reason: The Classic Experience," Southern Review, 10, no. 2 (April, 1974), 237-64.

the world, both ancient and modern, should have given rise to controversy was to be expected. What is interesting in the controversy that has developed is that some very serious criticisms of Voegelin's positions have arisen among scholars fundamentally sympathetic with his work—especially since the publication of *Anamnesis* (1966) and of the long awaited fourth volume of *Order and History, The Ecumenic Age* (1974), with its brief, but provocative treatment of Christian thinking and experience as represented in the writings of St. Paul.

I would like in this paper first to note a few of the more significant criticisms that have been voiced recently, then to show how Professor Voegelin's controversial positions are consistently intelligible in the light of the basic principles of his thought, and finally to identify what seem the major points of divergence between his interpretation of the Israelite-Christian revelation and those of traditional theology. In doing so, I hope to act as an intermediary between Voegelin and his critics, and especially between Voegelin and orthodox Christian theology—formulating the points of divergence as presenting important challenges to both sides.

The most extensive set of particular criticisms of Voegelin's treatment of Christianity is that in Gerhart Niemeyer's recent article on *The Ecumenic Age*.[1] Niemeyer's basic complaint is that by dismissing the question of the facticity of the "historical Jesus," and by treating the "Pauline Vision of the Resurrected" (the title of Voegelin's chapter on Paul) as "the entire 'speculation' of St. Paul as analyzed by Voegelin" and leaving out of consideration the possible miraculous encounter on the road to Damascus, Voegelin has neglected, indeed ruled out, the uniqueness of the Christian revelation, putting St. Paul "into the same category with Plato, with St. Paul's performance receiving a grade of 'superior,' and on the other hand with Hegel, who comes out worst." Voegelin has, in other words, treated the Christian revelation as part of a continuum

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[1] "Eric Voegelin's Philosophy and the Drama of Mankind," *Modern Age*, 20, no. 1 (Winter, 1976), pp. 28-39. See especially pp. 34-5.

of revelation that becomes clear in varying degrees among different philosophical thinkers and among various religious traditions. Moreover, says Niemeyer, " Voegelin's exegesis of St. Paul would not have to be changed if one removed Jesus Christ from it altogether. Voegelin allows that man is a creature in whom God can incarnate himself. St. Paul, however, reflects on what it means that God did incarnate himself in one particular man at one particular time." With regard to Voegelin's interpretation of the Resurrection as a " vision " on the part of St. Paul, Niemeyer says that Voegelin " would have to concede the application to himself of his own remarks that ' critical doubts ' about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ ' would mean that the critic knows how God has a right to let himself be seen . . .' " (quoting IV, 243) . Voegelin, that is, has both dismissed traditional Christian claims regarding the historical Incarnation and Resurrection, and interpreted the Incarnation in Jesus as part of a continum of Incarnation realized in varying degrees in universal mankind, a position that parallels his position on revelation as described above. " It seems that this once," says Niemeyer, " Voegelin has approached a great spiritual reality from a standpoint extraneous to it." If this is the case, it is a serious charge; an analysis of the particulars of the issue, however, will have to wait until later.

The other principal theme of complaint among Voegelin's recent critics has had to do with his conception of the relation between reason and revelation. Before the publication of *The Ecumenic Age,* Dante Germino, in an article on *Anamnesis,* said Voegelin had not yet treated " in any range or depth the entire thorny question of the relationship between philosophy and theology, reason and revelation, nature and grace " and suggested that " perhaps Voegelin's reticence or ambiguity on this entire range of topics may well reflect on [sic] *aporia* in his inquiry." [2] Since Voegelin does not attempt to deal with theology as such, but with " man's consciousness of his humanity

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[2] " Eric Voegelin's *Anamnesis,*" *Southern Review,* 7, no. 1 (Winter, 1971), p. 85.

as it differentiates historically " (IV, 302, and cf. IV, 242) by treating " the history of experiences and their symbolization " (II, 159), it is not suprising that he does not deal directly with the nature of theology or of grace. The topic of revelation, on the other hand, is central to his subject matter as he has defined it, and in *The Ecumenic Age* he tackles it directly, speaking of " the dichotomy of reason-revelation " as a fundamental misconstruction of thought deriving from the Stoic deformation of philosophy into doctrine and subsequently perpetuated in Christian theology to the present (IV 48, 236). Thomas J. J. Altizer, writing more recently, has expressed reservations about what he calls Voegelin's " herculean effort " to unite the Hellenic and Israelite-Christian break-throughs " into one revelation and one theophany." [3]

Clearly Voegelin's treatment of revelation, both of particular traditions of revelation and of revelation as such, has placed him in conflict with prominent traditional and modern schools of thought. What is surprising about this, however, is only that his critics should not have seen developing long ago, *in germine,* the positions they would later be surprised and disturbed by. Whether or not one might wish to agree with his conclusions, the complexities and controversial points of Voegelin's thought are clearly intelligible when one understands the basic principles according to which his analyses proceed. Since the first responsibility of any reader of a thinker as important and as challenging as Eric Voegelin is to understand him in the full range and subtlety of his thought, it will be worthwhile to consider briefly the theoretical foundations from which the larger structure of his philosophy of revelation unfolds.

In *The New Science of Politics,* which offered a preliminary sketch of the enterprise that was subsequently to develop into *Order and History,* Voegelin indicated that his goal was to raise the human and social sciences once again to the level of genuine theory. What he meant by theory he defined concisely

[3] "A New History and a New But Ancient God? A Review Essay," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* 43, no. 4 (Dec., 1975), p. 764.

as " an attempt at formulating the meaning of existence by explicating the content of a definite class of experiences " (p. 64). He went on to say that the argument of theory "is not arbitrary but derives its validity from the aggregate of experiences to which it must permanently refer for empirical control." The experiences in question are experiences of actual existential order as they are known in the inner life of one whose character is formed by them, a person such as Aristotle called the *spoudaios,* the mature man. That these are not simply the experiences of a self-enclosed, world-immanent entity, but " experiences of transcendence " is made clear subsequently in that book (p. 80) and in *Order and History.* He also indicated there one aspect of the solution of the problem of the relation of reason and revelation when he spoke of such insight into the human condition, when it is brought " to the ultimate border of clarity," as being that " which by tradition is called revelation " (p. 79). This is not an exhaustive definition of what Voegelin means by revelation, but it does indicate that revelation is a form of what Voegelin means by theoretical insight and that it lies along a continuum of such insights.

Connected with his conception of theory as the explication of concrete experiences is what he terms " the principle of correlation between theory and the maximal experiential differentiation " (p. 80). The constant substratum of experience in a concrete human life contains within it a range of differentiable features, some of which may be noticed and thereby raised into consciousness, and some of which may remain unnoticed and consequently obscure. Whether they are noticed or not they are always present within the fundamental experience. As Voegelin stated it in *Israel and Revelation,* " the range of human experience is always present in the fullness of its dimensions," although, " the structure of the range varies from compactness to differentiation " (I, 60). Experience may, in other words, become more or less conscious and articulate, depending on one's ability, and also willingness, to notice its full range of implicit contents. The process of differentiating in which

man articulates his existence to himself does not take place in
the lifetime of a single individual or even of a society or civiliza-
tion, "but extends through a plurality of societies " (I, 60),
and in doing so constitutes what Voegelin means by history,
i. e., "a process of increasingly differentiated insight into the
order of being in which man participates by his existence "
(IV, 1; see also I, 130; II, 2; IV, 6, 226, 303, 332-5).

Implicit in Voegelin's analysis is a distinction between major
and minor types of articulation of experience. For the most
part he confines his use of the term "differentiation " to the
major types; that is, he does not usually use it to refer to the
articulation of elements within a given area of experience of
which one is already conscious in a general way, but to the
emergence into consciousness of whole new areas of experience.[4]
The most important differentiations of this type constitute
what he calls "leaps in being," epoch-making advances in
consciousness which are not only cognitive but also qualitative
in that they affect the soul ontologically by restructuring it
in its existential order (I, 10). The continuity of the funda-
mental substratum of experience, however, remains the same;
whatever becomes differentiated out of it was always contained
within it. It will be helpful, therefore, to consider the constant
contents of this core of experience as analyzed by Voegelin.

It is, to begin with, an experience of existence, of participa-
tion in being: "Whatever man may be, he knows himself
a part of being " (I, 3). It is also an experience of movement
or change, especially of lasting and passing (I, 3; IV, 74); be-
cause man is not being itself, but only participates in being,
he experiences himself as one who has come into existence and
may also fall out of it. More fundamentally still, it is an ex-
perience of tension, of attraction *toward* being. This "tension
of existence " may express itself in various ways—not only as

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[4] An example of his relatively rare use of the term to refer to distinctions within
a given area of experience may be seen in III, 167, in his reference to Plato's
Statesman as offering " a more differentiated classification of types [of men] " than
did *The Republic*.

a fear of perishing, but also as a questioning unrest (" RCE,"
241), a desire to know and thereby to participate more fully
in real being: " The movement that draws man into existential
participation is a movement toward a more eminent degree of
reality . . ." (IV, 271). The differentiation of experience is it-
self a movement toward greater participation in being, since
in man the participation takes the form of consciousness
(Anam., 304); it is important to remember, Voegelin says,
that consciousness is not something that looks at reality from
a standpoint outside, but is itself reality: " Das Bewusstsein
aber ist die Realität menschlichen Partizipierens . . ." (Anam.,
306). The attraction toward eminent reality has the character
of an attraction toward the sacred in the full sense of that
word, since it is an attraction toward an inexhaustible mys-
terium (I, 2; IV, 330) that is both tremendum (IV, 233) and
fascinans (IV, 271). This is one reason Voegelin frequently
speaks of this fundamental attractive force that motivates man
in his existential strivings as a tension toward " the divine
ground " (beside the fact that this is the terminology of the
classical philosophers who first articulated the tension; see, e. g.,
" RCE," 243).

It is the reality of participation that constitutes what
Voegelin calls the " In-Between " or Metaxy character of hu-
man existence: man is in between limitedness as such and
fullness of being. He has a fundamental eros or tension toward
unlimited being, but can never reach it without ceasing to be
a finite existent—though the tension of not reaching it is
difficult to endure and may tempt him to try to overleap the
limits of the human condition through some form of Gnosis,
the attainment of a certain and definitive grasp of being itself
through knowledge. The open, non-gnostic striving toward
cognitive participation in being Voegelin represents by the
symbol of " the Question "; he says that " there is no answer
to the Question other than the Mystery as it becomes luminous
in the acts of questioning. Any attempt to find an answer by
developing a doctrine concerning spatio-temporal events will

destroy the In-Between structure of man's humanity" (IV, 330).

One of the major difficulties in arriving at a clear understanding of the primary or fundamental experience of existence that provides the substance of the later differentiations is that its mode of being is non-objectifiable: "the subject-object dichotomy, which is modeled after the cognitive relation between man and things in the external world, does not apply to the event of an ' experience-articulating-itself ' " (IV, 186; see also *Anam.*, 300). Thus the concept of the Metaxy is not an item of information about man as an objective (i. e. quasi-external) entity, but a symbolization of the fundamental tension that is a constant feature of human existence in actual experience. For man this tension in the soul is the bedrock of existential reality accessible to him in his attempts to raise into consciousness his participation in the mystery of being. It is the core experience from which his movements of searching and striving proceed and which he can never leave behind; and it will always remain a mystery to him which he can represent and communicate only through symbols.

The *telos* or goal of the tension is also a non-objectifiable mystery, and it too is present in the fundamental existential experience. It can be symbolized, but must not be hypostatized into an object separate from the concrete relationship of participation. One must not forget that when one says, "Man, in his existence, participates in being," the subject and predicate "are terms which explicate a tension of existence, and are not concepts denoting objects" (I, 2).

It is this mutual participation of being and existence in one another within the compact core of human experience that serves as the key to the intimate relationship between reason and revelation in Voegelin's thought. The core experience that eventually differentiates is not self-enclosed, nor is the soul that becomes constituted by the process of differentiation; rather, both open out beyond themselves into ultimate mystery. Or to put it another way, in the terms that Voegelin uses in his

analysis of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*: " Since God is present even in the confusion of the heart, preceding and motivating the search itself, the divine Beyond is at the same time a divine Within " (IV, 324). This divine reality present within the core of experience as the being in which existence participates is the moving force that by its power of attraction elicits the movements of the soul by which the contents of the experiential ground of thinking are differentiated and raised into consciousness and thereby constitute man's conscious existence as a soul in movement toward its transcendent goal. Because it is the divine reality of being itself that is the moving force in this, and because the movement is a movement *toward* being and in the process is a disclosure *of* being, the process of differentiation always has a revelatory or theophanic character, whether its emphasis is on the noetic (in the case of Philosophy) or on the spiritual or pneumatic (in the case of what is usually termed religious Revelation).

It is in this sense that Voegelin speaks of " the constitution of reason through revelation ": " The life of reason . . . is firmly rooted in a revelation . . ." because ". . . the God who appeared to the philosophers, and who elicited from Parmenides the exclamation ' Is!,' was the same God who revealed himself to Moses as the ' I am who (or: what) I am,' as the God who is what he is in the concrete theophany to which man responds " (IV, 228-9).

In the earlier volumes of *Order and History* Voegelin tended to use the terms " Reason " and " Revelation " for the disclosures of being to the Hellenic philosophers and the Israelite religious thinkers respectively (e. g. II, 204). In *The Ecumenic Age*, however, he shifted to different terms for these two leaps in being that would make clearer that both are theophanic events and have the character of ontological disclosure: " noetic " and " pneumatic " differentiation. In the case of the noetic differentiation, the discovery of reason, both Plato and Aristotle were aware, he says, that *noesis* was not an autonomous human project (as the later concept of " natural

reason" would have it): "Participation in the noetic move-
ment is not an autonomous project of action but the response
to a theophanic event (the Promethean light exceeding bright,
the Socratic *daimonion*) or its persuasive communication (the
Platonic Peitho). To this revelatory movement (*kinesis*) from
the divine ground, man can respond by his questioning and
searching, but the theophanic event itself is not at his com-
mand" (IV, 217). Although the process of noetic differentia-
tion was complex and required the contributions of several gen-
erations of Hellenic "mystic-philosophers,"[5] it may be de-
scribed concisely as "the adequate articulation and symboliza-
tion of the questioning consciousness" ("RCE," 241). The
Nous, once differentiated, can be applied to the investigation
of world-immanent ("natural" in the conventional sense)
reality, but it is not itself reducible to the status of a world-
immanent ("natural") entity. Rather, the very fact that it
is existent reality participating in being itself gives reason a
transcendent dimension: "Obviously, the Aristotelian nous is
more than the intellect that becomes active in the sciences of
world-immanent objects. The nous as the *theiotaton* [the
divinest part in man] is the region in the soul where man
transcends his mere humanity into the divine ground" (III,
306).[6]

The continuity between noetic differentiation and pneumatic
("Revelation" in the traditional terminology) is a function
of the fact that "the structure of a theophanic experience
reaches from a pneumatic center to a noetic periphery" (IV,
244). This is itself, of course, simply another way of stating
the basic principle discussed earlier that the core experience
that becomes differentiated in varying degrees, the experience
of participation in being, is "always present in the fullness of

[5] For a good summary of the process and its results see IV, 177-8.
[6] Defining the terms "immanent" and "transcendent," Voegelin says in
Anamnesis, p. 300: "Immanent und transzendent sind die räumlich-metaphorischen
Indizes, die wir in der post-noetischen Dispensation den Realitätsbereichen zuteilen,
die respektive zur Welt der Dinge in Raum und Zeit und zum göttlichen Sein des
Weltgrundes jenseits von Raum und Zeit geworden sind."

its dimensions." In the noetic differentiation, focal awareness (to borrow Michael Polanyi's terminology for the moment) is directed to the Nous, the questioning consciousness, while the pneumatic center, that level of reality in the depths of the soul at which it is experientially united with being itself, remains in comparative obscurity. In both differentiations, what is raised into consciousness from the depths of experience is the inner structure of human existence itself, in both its immanent and transcendent dimensions. A revelatory or theophanic event, in Voegelin's analysis, whether it is noetic or pneumatic in its emphasis, never provides information about the world; rather, it renders explicit what was always implicit in the substratum of experience.[7]

For this reason, revelation cannot be something arbitrary or " subjective " in the pejorative sense; the test of the truth of its content always remains its grounding in experienced reality. If a person makes a claim to have received through revelation any kind of informational knowledge, whether of rational truths, of miraculous occurrences (past, present, or future), or of political or military policies preferred by God (as in the case of Isaiah's urging King Ahaz to renounce military defense [I, 477]), he is simply misconstruing the nature of revelation. Informational understanding is to be had only through the necessary procedures of rational inquiry, the patient activity of the questioning consciousness as it carefully and critically raises its questions and considers the data of experience in the light of them. Any attempt to bypass this necessary process is in effect to try to overlap the human condition; it is to deviate into some form of Gnosis, intellectual,

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[7] Cf. II, 283: " The mystic-philosopher has no information to tender; he can only communicate the discovery which he has made in his own soul, hoping that such communication will stir up parallel discoveries in the souls of others." Cf. also III, 84, on Plato's conception of inquiry (zetema) as exegesis of the depths of the soul. For some modern interpretations of the nature of revelation that are fundamentally in accord with this position see H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), and John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (New York: Scribner's, 1966).

emotional, or volitional.[8] Because the Israelite revelation was focused on the pneumatic center rather than on the noetic periphery, the tradition deriving from it was always especially susceptible to such deviations; reason was not sufficiently articulated to be able to serve as a consistently adequate critical control on thought (I, 240, 327).

The discussion of pneumatic differentiation, in distinction from noetic, brings us at last to the specific topic of the paper, Voegelin's interpretation of Revelation, in the traditional sense, as constituted by the Israelite leap in being and its subsequent history in the Christian tradition. It will be worth tracing the pneumatic differentiation historically, since it took place over a far longer period than the noetic and, due to the lack of adequate noetic control, gave rise to more tendencies to derailment. Although Moses, in the symbol of the "I am who I am," was the first, according to Voegelin, to articulate the "compact experience of divine presence so as to express the essential omnipresence with man of a substantially hidden God" (I, 411), he accepts the tradition that the first movements of spiritual revelation took place in Abraham as an "inrush of divine reality into his soul" which gave rise to an expectation of future fulfillment: "In the case of Abram's experience this 'future' is not yet understood as the eternity under whose judgment man exists in his present. To be sure, Yahweh's *berith* is already the flash of eternity into time; but the true nature of this 'future' as transcendence is still veiled by the sensuous analogues of a glorious future in historical time" (I, 194). This futuristic component in the early experience remained a continuing influence, lasting through Israelite and later Judaic history and issuing into the apocalyptic litera-

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[8] For a discussion of Isaiah's speculation on the divine plan of history as a form of incipient Gnosis see I, 451. For the nature of the gnostic temptation as a general human problem ("The temptation to fall from a spiritual height that brings the element of uncertainty into final clarity down into the more solid certainty of world-immanent, sensible fulfillment . . .") see *SPG*, 107-9, 114. For a discussion of the range of possible varieties of Gnosis—intellectual, emotional, and volitional—see *NSP*, 124.

ture. At the time, however, it led to comparatively little because it did not become socially effective: " The new domain of Yahweh is not yet the political order of a people in Canaan; at the moment it does not extend beyond the soul of Abram."

The order of Israel as a people had its origin in Moses, and the order in the soul of Moses had its origin in his response to a further divine revelation, the next advance of pneumatic differentiation. This became a collective, as compared with a strictly individual, reality when Moses communicated the substance of the leap in being more or less effectively to the Israelites and thereby constituted them as a people directed toward transcendence: " To the skeptical sons of Israel Moses will have to say: ' *Ehyeh* [I am] has sent me to you ' ([Exod.] 3:14). The people thus will break the bondage of Egypt and enter the present under God, once they have responded to the revelation of God's presence with them " (I, 407).

The spiritual order thus founded subsequently had its famous ups and downs. It is not necessary to go into them in detail here. It will suffice to say that the downs took three principal forms. One was an immanentizing tendency deriving from the residual compactness of the experience: a tendency to equate the transcendent goal of the tension of Israel's existence with some form of worldly success, such as a kingdom of Solomonic grandeur in Canaan. Another was a tendency to retreat from conscious existence in the immediate presence of God by reintroducing mediating existences: the Davidic king conceived of as " Son of God " (I, 397), the reconceiving of the living Word of God as sacred Scripture (I, 367), and the fictional invention of the Deuteronomic Moses as Lawgiver and author of Scripture (I, 364). The other was the recurrent temptation among the prophets to develop what Voegelin calls " metastatic " tendencies, to attempt to escape from the tension of existence by overleaping the human condition, " to make the leap in being a leap out of existence into a divinely transfigured world beyond the laws of mundane existence " (I, 452), as in the various expectations of a coming age in which Israel

will no longer have to defend herself with arms, the lion will lie down with the lamb, holy men will be able to have direct insight into the intentions of God, and so on.

The one really significant advance that was made in the later history of Israel, on the other hand, was closely related to this last pattern of deviation. The metastatic tendencies were a confused outgrowth of an inchoate further step in the process of pneumatic differentiation. This was the realization " that there are problems of order beyond the existence of a concrete society and its institutions," that the *terminus ad quem* of the prophetic movement, and of history itself, is ultimate transcendence (I, 491). Voegelin speaks of this " third procreative act of divine order in history " as " The Exodus of Israel from itself " and he sees it as culminating in the representative suffering of Deutero-Isaiah. This was the high point of pneumatic differentiation in Israel, but it came almost simultaneously with the major defection of Israel into the Deuteronomist legalism and scripturalism, which Voegelin considers the major point of demarcation between the history of Israel and that of Judaism (I, 372). His comment on this defection is significant because it indicates the character of the crucial problem of " religion " as such, a problem that Christianity was going to have to confront centuries later, especially after the Council of Nicaea: ". . . it looks as if in Deuteronomy we were touching the genesis of ' religion,' defined as the transformation of existence in historical form into the secondary possession of a ' creed ' concerning the relation between God and man " (I, 376). That this should have happened, he says, is understandable, almost inevitable, because " the prophets, philosophers, and saints, who can translate the order of the spirit into the practice of conduct without institutional support and pressure, are rare. For its survival in the world, therefore, the order of the spirit has to rely on a fanatical belief in the symbols of a creed more often than on the *fides caritate formata*—though such reliance, if it becomes socially predominant, is apt to kill the order it is supposed to preserve " (I, 376-7). The crucial

conflict, that is, is between the immanentizing, virtually Gnostic, closing of faith into dogmatism or the opening of faith into actual participation in its transcendent goal, between the reduction of faith to opinion or the flowering of faith in *caritas*.

The movement toward the latter, the realization of Israel's final Exodus from itself, was not taken up again until the time of Christ. At that time it manifested itself in various ways, but the most important was in the concrete experience of certain individuals, among whom the central figure was Jesus of Nazareth. It is here, of course, that the greatest area of difficulty for Voegelin in his analysis of historical experience begins. In *The New Science of Politics*, where he did not have to go into this area in any detail, he could speak of " the appearance of Christ " as the " acme " of a giant cycle of spiritual development that " culminated in the maximum of differentiation, through the revelation of the Logos in history " (p. 164).[9] When he came to a direct and detailed treatment of the theophanic events from which Christianity arose, however, he had, if he was to operate in accord with his basic theoretical principles, to investigate the revelation on the level of concrete experience.

In view of this fundamental requirement of Voegelin's own process of noetic inquiry, it should be understandable why he chose Paul rather than Jesus as his major point of focus—since Paul left writings that speak of his experience directly, whereas the experience of Jesus comes to us only through the mediating interpretations of other writers. It should also be understandable, in the light of his basic conception of revelation, why he would have to concentrate on the Pauline " vision of the resurrected " as a symbolic expression of the actual event of pneumatic differentiation within Paul himself, and not on any sort of external miraculous manifestation. For such an external manifestation could not possibly, on Voegelin's terms, amount to revelation. Revelation after all, according to

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[9] Cf. I, 345: " With the appearance of Jesus, God himself entered into the eternal present of history." Cf. also " GC," 93.

Voegelin's conception, does not provide information about what is *outside* experience; rather it is a process of differentiation *within* experience. The most that an external miraculous appearance of Jesus could offer to an observer would be an indication of the power of God to restore a human person to life after he has died. From the traditional Christian point of view this sort of evidence of divine omnipotence and graciousness to man is not negligible; for those who have little capacity for conscious, differentiated spiritual experience, it may be a valuable means of orientation toward the transcendent God whose presence they can know only through inference. Even a staunch traditionalist, however, will have to admit that to make the mode of understanding of the spiritually ungifted into a norm or standard and to restrict the authoritative spokesmen of the faith, such as Paul, to so narrow a standard would be to reduce Christianity to a travesty of itself. If Paul's revelation were limited to the viewing of an external physical body and the hearing of physical sounds, he would have no spiritual authority; he could speak of evidence for the existence and beneficent intentions of an external God, but he could not tell us, as he so frequently does in his letters, that men can now enjoy the happiness of spiritual communion with that God. The question, Voegelin might say in response to Niemeyer, is not how God has a right to reveal himself, but how revelation in the most proper sense can actually take place. A miraculous manifestation could *indicate* something about God, but it would not actually *reveal* him. It would only point in the direction of the divine reality; it would not bring the soul into immediate relationship with it.

It may be helpful with respect to this issue to take notice of a distinction that St. Thomas Aquinas makes between two levels of faith—*fides informis* and *fides formata*—a distinction Voegelin is well aware of (*NSP*, 79; I 377).[10] *Fides informis* is faith without its proper form, i. e., without its vital principle

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[10] For Aquinas's discussion of the distinction see *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 4, aa. 3-6; q. 23, a. 6, a. 8. This work will subsequently be abbreviated as *ST*.

or " soul." It is simple belief of the sort that infers a reality external to itself, and its relationship to the reality that is its object remains purely extrinsic. *Fides formata,* formed faith, on the other hand, is faith that has *caritas,* the divine love, as its vital principle: " . . . charity is called the form of faith, inasmuch as it is through charity that faith is brought to completion and given its form." [11] Since the divine essence itself is *caritas,* and since the virtue of *caritas* created in the soul by grace is a participation in the divine life and unites the soul to God immediately, *fides caritate formata* is intrinsically, not extrinsically, related to its object.[12] Unformed faith is valuable as a preparation for formed faith, but it is rudimentary and has no authority grounded in experience by which to speak of God or of the life of the spirit.

From this it should be clear why Voegelin would not choose to focus his discussion on the miracle of Jesus's rising from the dead and appearing to Paul on the road to Damascus. Looking at the issue in the light of Aquinas's distinctions, even the orthodox Christian who accepts the miracle as a true event must acknowledge that, wonderful as it is, it pertains to an elementary level of faith. *Fides caritate formata,* on the other hand, is faith on its most mature level. It is also the culmination of the spiritual process of differentiation that Voegelin has chosen as his subject of study. As Voegelin analyzes it and as the orthodox Christian, once he locates Voegelin's point of focus, will have to agree, the story Paul tells of the death, resurrection, and transfiguration of Jesus becomes, when Paul is speaking of his own *inner* experience of the presence of Christ, a mythic language by which to articulate and communicate an experienced spiritual reality. One of the major challenges for Christianity in the modern world, says Voegelin, is to find a way to explain to a literalizing or psychologizing public that myth can serve as " an objective language for the expres-

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[11] *ST, II-II,* q. 4, a. 3. Cf. q. 23, a. 6, ad 2: " Faith works by love, not instrumentally, as a master by his servant, but as by its proper form."

[12] *ST,* II-II, q. 23, a. 2.

sion of a transcendental irruption, more adequate and exact as an instrument of expression than any rational system of symbols " (*FER, 22*). The extent to which the vocabulary of that myth is drawn from prior experience of external events is a question that both Voegelin and the orthodox Christian can agree amicably to set aside, since it is not directly pertinent to the analysis of a pneumatic differentiation.

The Pauline differentiation, says Voegelin, was a substantial advance over such earlier ones as that presented in the Platonic myth of the Demiurgic presence of God in man, society, history, and the cosmos. Plato's myth was " carefully devised so as to make the tale of divine presence in reality compatible with the existential truth of man's tension toward the divine ground " (IV, 249), but Paul's vision carried him " beyond the structure of creation to its source in the freedom and love of divine creativity " (IV, 250).

This led to three important new insights. Paul, says Voegelin, differentiated the ordering process in existence to the point that " the transcosmic God and his Agape were revealed as the mover in the theophanic events which constitute meaning in history." He also " differentiated fully the experience of the directional movement by articulating its goal, its *teleion,* as the state of *aphtharsia* [immortality] . . ." And finally he " fully differentiated the experience of man as the site where the movement of reality becomes luminous in its actual occurrence," so that man becomes revealed as " the creature in whom God can incarnate himself with the fullness (*pleroma*) of his divinity, transfiguring man into the God-man (Col. 2:9) " (IV, 251).

It is important to note that in all of this Paul is not, says Voegelin, presenting a doctrine, but "articulating his experience of the God who enters him through the vision and by this act of entering transfigures him" (IV, 256). Doctrine is a secondary symbolism that develops in both philosophy and theology when the original experiential insights have been lost. It literalizes and reifies or hypostatizes the primary symbols engendered by

the theophanic events and then elaborates itself as an intellectual game with concepts that have lost their substance. In the Patristic period the openness of the theophanic field was substantially preserved, according to Voegelin's estimate, for almost three centuries until the Council of Nicaea in 325 A. D. The subsequent history of Christian theology, however, has been largely a process of deformation of experiential symbols into doctrine. Doctrine is not an entirely negative phenomenon, he acknowledges, since it can help to protect " an historically achieved state of insight against . . . disintegrative pressures " under conditions of cultural turmoil (IV, 43-4), but it can also impede efforts to restore substance to religious thinking. Thus, " the prestige of the deformation is the source of the constant tension between dogmatic and mystic theology " (IV, 48). That tension of this sort should develop is inevitable in view of the fact that experiential insights can be expressed only through symbols and that " the possibility of literalist or hypostatizing derailments " is " inherent to all symbolization " (IV, 147).[13] This problem can be more or less acute, however, and in Voegelin's opinion it has become especially so in our own period: " In our time, the inherited symbolisms of ecumenic humanity are disintegrating, because the deforming doctrinalization has become socially stronger than the experiential insights it was meant to protect " (IV, 58). This is why he says that we have lost the reality of man's existence in the Metaxy behind a mass of accumulated symbols, secondary and tertiary, and that his own purpose in *Order and History* is " to raise this obstacle and its structure into consciousness, and by its removal to help in the return to the truth of reality as it reveals itself in history " (IV, 58).

This should serve to set forth the basic pattern of Voegelin's thought on the subject of revelation. We can now turn to consider some of the points of difference between Voegelin's analysis and more traditional theological thinking. Many of Voegelin's major challenges to theology have already become

[13] Cf. " IES," pp. 235-6.

clear. Far from having neglected the question of the relation of reason and revelation, he has explored it in great depth and in the process has formulated what seem sound criteria by which to evaluate the authenticity and theoretical adequacy of theological analysis. He has pointed out, for example, the danger of a loss of substance to thinking that forgets its experiential roots. He has also developed a clear theoretical grasp of the nature of human experience as existence characterized by a constant tension, from which man is continually tempted to flee into impossible metastatic dreams or into gnostic certainties. " Uncertainty is the very essence of Christianity," as Voegelin said in *The New Science of Politics* (p. 122), and the Christian critic who would find fault with him for insufficient interest in the question of " the historical Jesus " must not forget to ask himself if his own interest in that question is related to a desire to turn faith into certainty through some form of intellectual gnosis. Or if he wishes to defend the importance of dogma regarding this or other matters, Voegelin reminds him that he must be on guard against making *fides informis* into an absolute norm that would impede both authentic rational inquiry and the further movement of the soul into *fides formata*. To the pietist, on the other hand, who might wish to dispense with theoretical formulations altogether, Voegelin offers the warning that gnostic deviations can take emotional and volitional forms as well as intellectual (*NSP*, 124).

Could an orthodox Christian critic, nevertheless, address any challenging questions to Professor Voegelin? Let us consider some possibilities. For one thing there is the matter of the need for at least a certain amount of *fides informis* in the life of the Church. There will probably always be many among the faithful who will be incapable, at least in this life, of sharing in the conscious spiritual experience that is the vital principle of religion and that engenders its primary symbols. Lacking experiential insight of their own and consequently incapable of evaluating claims to it in others, such people will probably always feel strongly dependent on what they think of as " ob-

jective" evidence in the form of external miraculous signs. If the ecclesiastical statesman, who needs some means of orienting such people toward the divine reality in the hope that they may enjoy its vision in the life to come, has external signs of this sort that he can use for this purpose, he has good reason to be grateful for them. Whether such signs have been granted, of course, must remain a matter to be decided through rational inquiry on the basis of historical evidence carefully tested for its reliability. To decide apart from such inquiry that such signs could not be granted, on the other hand, would be to place limitations on both the divine power and the divine generosity.

Voegelin is, in fact, well aware of the need for statesmanship that can shepherd those who lack insight of their own—in the religious sphere as well as in the political. He has high praise for Plato's treatment of this issue in *The Laws*, for example, and regarding the dispute between Comte and Littré over Comte's desire to substitute a Religion of Humanity for that of the Christian Church, Voegelin says that Littré simply did not understand the need for some form of institutionalization of the spirit (*FER*, 143). Voegelin's own statements regarding "religion," on the other hand, have tended to have a rather negative tone (I, 376; IV, 43-8). Why this should be so ought to be quite clear by now; we have already sufficiently explored the grounds for his distrust of dogmatism. There is more to religion than dogmatism, however, and if as Voegelin says and as the churchman must agree, "precautions of meditative practice" are needed to foster "the process of experiential reactivation and linguistic renewal" that the doctrinization of symbols is liable to interrupt (IV, 56), one must also recognize that for the average person the only form of meditative practice normally available to him is his participation in the worship of an organized religious community. It is true, and the orthodox churchman should acknowledge it to his shame, that the Church's practice of its *magisterium* has often tended to promote dogmatism and *fides informis* over meditation and *fides formata*, but it has not done so exclusively, and the

thoughtful theologian remains aware that the Church is *semper reformanda*—both in need of reform and capable of it.

There is a further question related to this issue, however. That has to do with the ultimate prospects of those not now capable of actually realizing the goal of meditative practice. As Voegelin himself has said, " meditation requires more energy and discipline than most people are able to invest " (" IES," 236), and even when a person does engage in it, " the theophanic event itself is not at his command " (IV, 217). Much, perhaps too much, of the Church's teaching is based on the assumption that spiritual experience of the mysteries of the faith will be realized for many only in the life to come. But what indeed *can* one hope for in the way of a life to come— for anyone? The traditional Christian hope of a future life is definite, but Professor Voegelin's thinking on the subject is difficult to get a precise picture of. On the one hand he takes the idea of immortality very seriously, speaking of it as " a fundamental human experience " that may rise " to the lucidity of consciousness in which it becomes clear that the divine can be experienced as immortal because the experiencing soul shares or participates . . . in the divine " (II, 206). But on the other hand he is wary about allowing this experience to be turned into a doctrine of immortality (see, e. g., " IES," 236), and his frequent references to Anaximander's dictum that all things must perish once again into the Apeiron (the Boundless) from which they came must make the reader wonder whether Voegelin's own idea of what awaits the soul after death is a complete dissolution of the individual existent back into absolute being. To attempt to believe with certainty that the human person will continue in individual existence after death would be to speculate beyond experience, and it is obvious why Voegelin would wish to avoid this, but the Christian faith in the risen life to come is not, at its most lucid and authentic, an intellectual speculation, but rather an act of trust in the divine generosity. This act of trust is itself rooted in concrete experiences of the soul—both the experience of the profound

longing of the individual for continuing life and the experience of the generosity of the God who draws the soul to himself and discloses himself to it in the theophanic events. Professor Voegelin has not addressed himself directly to this issue in his writings, but there is no reason why the position of faith, when formulated in this way rather than as a speculative doctrine, would not be compatible with his theoretical principles. If the legitimacy of such faith should be admitted, however, the concern of the ecclesiastical statesman with the possibilities the next life may hold for those who now remain spiritually ungifted must seem reasonable, even a necessary corollary of the *caritas* which is the soul of faith. What to make of a situation in which it is the spiritually ungifted themselves who try to play the role of statesman, on the other hand, is perhaps an issue best left in silence.

Of the criticisms by Niemeyer of Voegelin's approach to Christianity, two important ones remain to be discussed. These had to do with the questions of the uniqueness of the Christian revelation and of the uniqueness of the Incarnation of God in Jesus. Niemeyer said that whereas Voegelin discusses man as a creature in whom God can incarnate himself, St. Paul reflected on what it means that God did incarnate himself in one particular man. Both from Voegelin's point of view and also from St. Paul's, the Incarnation is not something limited to Jesus, unless one wishes to find some other interpretation for the many references in Paul to the idea that Christians are baptized into Christ's life, " have the mind of Christ " (I Cor. 2: 16), " have fullness of life in him " in whom "the fullness of the divine reality dwells bodily " (Col. 2: 9-10), and are indeed so intimately one with Christ that he can say " it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me " (Gal. 2:20).[14]

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[14] The passage from Colossians is one Voegelin himself has referred to (IV, 251), as mentioned above. Whether or not Colossians may be considered to have been written by Paul himself, it is at least a very early document and is unquestionably from Paul's circle; see Wayne A. Meeks, ed., *The Writings of St. Paul: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1972), p. 114, for a discussion of the authorship of this letter. Paul's authorship of I Corinthians and Galatians is undisputed.

Similarly the actual participation of the faithful in Christ and in the divine life itself was a constant theme of Patristic and Medieval theology.[15] This is, after all, simply an aspect of the question discussed earlier regarding *fides caritate formata* as effecting immediate union of the soul with God.

For most of its history, however, the orthodox Christian tradition has assumed that although each of the faithful is united with God through grace, there remains something unique in an absolute sense about the union of humanity and divinity in Jesus. Aquinas's approach was to distinguish between what he called habitual grace, which Christians share with Christ, and the grace of union, which belongs to Christ alone. As Aquinas formulated the issue, it was a question of whether the union of the two natures in Christ took place by grace.[16] One objection to the idea that it was by grace, he said, could be that since every saint is united to God by grace, if Christ was also, it would seem that he was God no more than other holy men. The supposition of the additional *gratia unionis* solved the problem. Or did it? Professor Voegelin could reasonably claim that this is a classic example of the process of the deformation of primary symbols into doctrine: that Aquinas, following an uncritical tradition, simply literalized the scriptural symbol of the " only son " (*monogenes*)[17] and

[15] For a modern expression of this theme, cf. Georges Florovsky's statement that " the core of the conception of catholicity (Sobornost) " is the idea that each member of the Church " is in direct and immediate union with Christ and His Father," in " The Church: Her Nature and Task," p. 53, quoted in Peter A. Chamberas, " Some Aspects of the Ecclesiology of Georges Florovsky," in *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honor of the Very Reverend Georges Vasilievich Florovsky*, ed. David Neiman and Margaret Schatkin (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1973), pp. 430-1.

[16] *ST*, III, q. 2, a. 10, " Utrum unio incarnationis sit per gratiam." For a further indication that Aquinas thought the union of God and man in Jesus to be absolutely unique in kind, consider also *Ibid.*, q. 7, a. 3, which says that Jesus did not have the virtue of faith, because he had no need of it.

[17] For a discussion of the *monogenes* in John, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (I-XII) (New York): Doubleday, 1966), pp. 13-14. For the ancient Near Eastern background of the image see Voegelin, I, 390; Voegelin traces it ultimately to Egyptian coronation rites.

did so by the invention of a verbal concept with no reference to experience. It would obviously be difficult for a defender of the tradition to take Aquinas's side here, since clearly neither he nor Aquinas himself, according to their own premises, could have any concrete grasp of the supposed reality to which the phrase *gratia unionis* refers. To play such a game with an opponent as critically acute as Voegelin would be like inviting him to join one in admiring the Emperor's new clothes.

Is orthodoxy necessarily locked into such a position, however? There is another way of formulating the underlying issue that never occurred to the earlier tradition, and that is to ask if the union of man and God in Christ is to be interpreted as unique in kind or in degree. There is no need to try to settle that issue here; it is sufficient to identify it as a possible approach to show that the conflict between Voegelin's position and that of orthodoxy may not be a complete impasse. This very question has, in fact, been taken up in recent times by theologians who grow out of the orthodox tradition and intend fidelity to it but who do not interpret orthodoxy as such as requiring the more customary interpretation.[18] It is worth re-

[18] See, e. g., D. M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (New York: Scribner's, 1948), and W. Norman Pittenger, *The Word Incarnate: A Study of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959). I wish to make clear that in suggesting a conception of the Incarnation of God in Jesus as unique in degree, by its incomparable fullness, while denying that it is absolutely unique in kind, I do not intend to suggest what might be called a "humanistic" theory of Incarnation—as though participation in divinity were a natural property of man as an independent, world-immanent entity. Such a "humanistic" conception, moreover, would be the farthest thing from Voegelin's intentions as well. Voegelin has consistently opposed the concept of a world-immanent, autonomous human nature. For him, humanity is not a universal, "merely natural" quality all men share; rather it is constituted through experience of transcendence, and these come only by divine grace. (See *Anam.* 290-1; III, 358; IV, 304-5; and "RCE," 252.) To put it another way, not all men are actually human, and those who are (to whatever degree) become so through the divine gift that makes them sharers in the life that was incarnate in its fullness only in Jesus. Cf. Voegelin's comment on Matt. 16:17 and John 6:44 in "GC," 91: "The divine Sonship is not revealed through an information tendered by Jesus, but through a man's response to the full presence in Jesus of the same Unknown God by whose presence he is inchoatively moved in his

membering that, as Alan Richardson said in his *Creeds in the Making*, the Chalcedonian Definition did not prescribe a theory of how Godhead and manhood were united in Christ but contented itself with insisting on the mere fact of their union in him. " Thus," he says, " it permits the formulation of theories provided that the principle is safeguarded in them." [19] Voegelin's interpretation of Incarnation in terms of continuity and universality would not in any way contradict this principle; rather, it is one possible theoretical approach beginning from it.

With regard to the question of the uniqueness of the Christian revelation, whether, as Niemeyer put it, Paul can legitimately be placed on a continuum of revelation with non-Christian thinkers, the spokesman for the orthodox position might reasonably claim that the miracle of Christ's resurrection rationally inferred from historical testimony such as that of

own existence." Cf. III, 363-4, 367 on the problem of potential and actual humanity.

[19] *Creeds in The Making* (London: SCM Press, 1951), pp. 84-5. For a more extensive theoretical discussion of the same idea, see Bernard J. F. Lonergan, " The Origins of Christian Realism," in *A Second Collection* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), pp. 239-61, especially pp. 251-3 and 259. Voegelin's own interpretation of the Definition of Chalcedon appears in " IES," 263: " In the light of these implications, then, the symbolism of Incarnation would express the experience, with a date in history, of God reaching into Man and revealing Him as the Presence that is the flow of presence from the beginning of the world to its end. History is Christ written large. This last formulation is not in conflict with the Platonic ' Man written large.' To be sure, the two symbolisms differ, because the first one is engendered by a pneumatic experience in the context of Judaic-Christian revelation, while the second one is engendered by a noetic experience in the context of Hellenic philosophy; but they do not differ with regard to the structure of the reality symbolized. In order to confirm the sameness of structure expressed in different symbolisms, I shall quote the essential passage from the Definition of Chalcedon (A. D. 451), concerning the union of the two natures in the one person of Christ: ' Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . truly God and truly man . . . recognized in two natures . . . the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence.' This valiant attempt by the Patres to express the two-in-one reality of God's participation in man, without either compromising the separateness of the two or splitting the one, concerns the same structure of intermediate reality, of the *metaxy*, the philosopher encounters when he analyses man's consciousness of participation in the divine ground of his existence. The reality of the Mediator and the intermediate reality of consciousness have the same structure."

St. Paul in I Cor. 15 gives Christianity a special basis for hope that all who put their trust in God may share in that risen life. The reasons why Voegelin would not consider an external manifestation of that sort to be revelation in the proper sense of the word, however, has already been made clear, as has the fact that even the orthodox believer himself must admit that a miracle is not a direct disclosure of the divine reality but only an indication of it. That actual revelation, in the full sense, should be interpreted as continuous with genuine spiritual insight wherever it occurs cannot be said, moreover, to be a necessarily unorthodox position, since numerous representatives of orthodoxy, including Aquinas himself, have held it.[20] The implication, even of the orthodox position, is that where the Christian revelation may be said to be unique in kind is only in the lower region of revelation, that of external indication, while in the area of actual disclosure of divine reality it is unique only in degree—unless one wishes to claim that never except among professing Christians has there been actual *caritas* or even genuine wisdom. This is, of course, a position not unknown among spokesmen for orthodoxy, but it involves inferences about the experience of non-Christians that by their very nature would be impossible to support from evidence and that would place very narrow limits on God's action. It amounts to a doctrinaire exclusivism that cannot accord well with the fundamental Christian belief in God's providential care for all of mankind.[21] On this point Voegelin

[20] Consider Justin Martyr, I *Apologia*, xlvi, and II, xiii, in Henry Bettenson, ed. and trans., *The Early Christian Fathers*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 60 and 63-4, and Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, I, v (28,1), in Bettenson, pp. 168-9. For Aquinas, See *ST*, III, q. 8, a. 3, " Utrum Christus sit caput omnium hominum." Cf. also *ST*, II-II, q. 23, a. 2, ad 1: " The Divine Essence Itself is charity, even as it is wisdom, and goodness. Therefore, just as we are said to be good with the goodness which is God, and wise with the wisdom which is God (since the goodness by which we are formally good is a participation of Divine goodness, and the wisdom by which we are formally wise, is a share of Divine wisdom), so too, the charity by which formally we love our neighbour is a participation of Divine charity."

[21] Cf. Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, p. 155: ". . . it is not Christian doctrine that the gift of God's love is restricted to Christians." Cf. also Bernard Lonergan,

challenges Christianity to live up to its calling to realize fully
the inherent universality that is of its essence.

A final challenge Professor Voegelin offers to the potential
defender of orthodoxy is to be clear about the nature of his
loyalty to the tradition he defends. If Voegelin is distrustful
of doctrinal formulations, it is because they so easily can lose
their experiential substance and degenerate into empty words.
To maintain his own authenticity of faith the orthodox inter-
preter must always remember that his primary loyalty is not
to the formulae of tradition, but to the spiritual intention that
gave rise to them. He must be willing to go behind the words,
" to deconstruct the concept," as Paul Ricoeur puts it,[22] in
order to recover his living communion with that intention—
which is itself the mind of Christ. He must remember, as
Georges Florovsky has said, that " tradition is not a principle
striving to restore the past, using the past as a criterion for
the present. . . . Tradition is the constant abiding of the Spirit
and not only the memory of words." [23]

<div align="right">EUGENE WEBB</div>

University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Philosophy of God and Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 20,
to the effect that supernatural revelation and supernatural grace, to use the tra-
ditional terminology, are present in all religions and among all mankind. Karl
Rahner has said, " Just because grace is free and unmerited, this does not mean
that it is rare (theology has been led astray for too long already by the tacit
assumption that grace would no longer be grace if God became too free with
it)," *Nature and Grace* (London and New York: Stagbooks, 1963), p. 31, quoted
in Alan Richardson, *Religion in Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia: Westminster
Press, 1966), pp. 117-18.

[22] *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. Don Ihde
(Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 270.

[23] " Sobornost," p. 63, quoted in Chamberas, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

VOEGELIN'S *FROM ENLIGHTENMENT TO REVOLUTION* *

A REVIEW ARTICLE

IT HAS BEEN twenty years since the work of Eric Voegelin was last reviewed in these pages (by Anton-Hermann Chroust, commenting at length on the second volume of *Order and History*— Vol. 21 [July, 1958] 381-91). Yet the volume now under consideration goes back to the 1940's and early 50's when Voegelin was at work on a history of political thought and had not yet completed the analytical schemes which inform the five volumes of *Order and History*. Except for two passages[1], the studies published in *From Enlightenment to Revolution* are appearing in print for the first time, at the instance of Professor Hallowell.

A long-time student of Voegelin, Ellis Sandoz, has called this work " perhaps the best single introduction to Voegelin's philosophy of politics."[2] Its studies of Voltaire and Bossuet, of Helvétius and Pascal, of Comte and de Maistre, and of Turgot, Bakunin, Marx, and a number of lesser luminaries of modernity focus on the disordered experiences of reality that underlie their speculations. Another Voegelin student, John S. Kirby, has written an excellent summary of these studies: " Voegelin seeks to determine not only what these men thought, but also . . . identifies the essential pattern as one of spiritual disintegration. The medieval, Christian pilgrim's progress towards a salvation beyond history is replaced by the intramundane progress of enlightened intellectuals. The spiritual structure of Augustine's *historia sacra* is discarded for the ' truths ' of natural science, and the beatitude of Aristotle's *bios theoretikos* is replaced by the job of pragmatic action.

"At the heart of this development, Voegelin sees an emergent will to power which seeks unqualified control over society in the name of one new gospel or another: the *encyclopédistes'* enlighten-

[1] Pages 201-16 were originally published as " Bakunin's Confession " in *The Journal of Politics* 8 (February, 1946) 24-43; pages 273-75 and 276-98 (the bulk of chapter XI) are substantially the same as " The Formation of the Marxian Revolutionary Idea," *Review of Politics* 12 (July, 1950) 275-302.

[2] *Western Political Quarterly* 28 (December, 1975) 744.

ment, Turgot's progressivism, Comte's positivism, Bakunin's anarchism, and Marx's socialism. Within the doctrine of progress shared by these thinkers, there lurks, contends Voegelin, a strain of magic that seeks to reconstitute human nature in the image of the magicians who have taken the process of history into their own hands. This period provides a prelude to the totalitarian movements of our century, which translated these aspirations into concrete action." [3]

Yet there is much more to these studies than a simple critique of modernity. As Professor Michael Dillon has remarked, *From Enlightenment to Revolution* is " an important and instructive book, but one to be approached with some caution" since it is not immediately evident where this early work stands "in the evolution of Voegelin's reflections upon the problems of historical consciousness and human order." [4]

It is immediately apparent to the most casual reader of *From Enlightenment to Revolution*—and indeed, of Voegelin's other works as well—that he is a religious thinker who has diagnosed the crisis of Western civilization as a crisis of the spirit. This is the central problem of his early studies, in which he is like a contemporary Origen exposing modern ideologists as the earlier writer did the gnostics of his day. He seeks to show how it is that modernity is a " despiritualizing process " [5] and goes on to formulate " a theory of spiritual disease " [6] which constitutes the core

The symptoms of this disease—" the critical breakdown of Western civilization "—are man's reduction to the level of utilitarian existence and the atrophy of his spiritual substance: " Spiritual impotence destroys the order of the soul." [7] And the cause of this " dedivinizing " of the world is the destruction of " a universe of symbol " by men closed to " transcendental Being " who would make themselves into gods.[8] Voegelin writes that the moderns no longer participate " in transcendental reality, a communication in which the spirituality of man is constituted as the autonomous, organizing center of his personality." [9]

One of Voegelin's major traits as a student of political philoso-

[3] *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 9 (June, 1976) 364.

[4] *The Intercollegiate Review* 11 (Winter-Spring, 1976) 103.

[5] Dante Germino, *The National Review* 27 (Oct. 24, 1975) 1186.

[6] Ellis Sandoz, *The Western Political Quarterly* 28 (December, 1975) 744. of the book.

[7] *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, 95, 298.

[8] *Ibid.*, 116, 94.

[9] *Ibid.*, 158.

phy is his habitual employment of religious language to describe political conditions and problems. For instance, he writes that " the intramundane hubris of self-salvation culminates logically . . . in the improvement on God through the creation of a man who does not need salvation. The Spirit has become reason; the Savior has become the enlightened director of mankind; the Father has become the creator of the superman—the Trinity has become intramundane in the intellectual " ; and again: " The Marxian spiritual disease, like the Comtean, consists in the self-divinization and self-salvation of man; an intramundane *logos* of human consciousness is substituted for the transcendental *logos* " ; and finally: " The problem of human history is precisely the tension between the historical existence of man and his transcendental destination." [10]

Together with his identification of the modern problem as a spiritual one and his use of religious language to describe it, Voegelin frequently employs the modifiers, "Christian" and "Anti-Christian" without specifying what they mean. Yet we cannot avoid the impression that they play a very important role in his analysis. Thus if we are adequately to understand and evaluate that analysis, we are obliged to make the effort to explicate his meaning of Christianity. This will constitute the chief task of the present review.

The question will be whether or to what extent the "experience of transcendence " and the " divine ground " of which Voegelin writes so often are informed by the revelation of the New Testament and its subsequent exegesis in Christian tradition. Depending upon our answer to that question, we may then conclude whether Voegelin's critique of modern gnosticism (of positivism, of Marxism, etc.) can be said to be a Christian critique.

In his early studies, Voegelin appears to associate himself with " the humanist and Christian tradition." [11] But if he is a " Christian humanist," [12] we must ask in what sense Christian and what humanism this is. In Voegelin's use of phrases such as " the values of classical and Christian civilization " [13] there is more than a suggestion that he finds it unnecessary to differentiate between classical Greek, Hebrew, and Christian experiences of transcendence. Yet one, at least, of his reviewers found to be problematic this failure or his refusal to differentiate. Referring to the problem of interpreting Voegelin's meaning and its significance, Thomas Molnar

[10] *Ibid.*, 134, 276, 158.
[11] *Ibid.*, 95 f., for example.
[12] *Ibid.*, 133.
[13] *Ibid.*, 79.

asks whether he is a Christian, a classical Greek, or a German idealist.[14] " It is hard to see where he fits " among Christian philosophers of history. The earlier Voegelin " seemed to be a *philosopher* speculating about mankind's growing awareness of transcendental reality " in a manner that was at least congruous with Christian revelation. Hence the ease with which many committed Christians, including Catholics, warmed to Voegelin's analysis of the excesses of contemporary ideologies. But was not the ancients' " unknown God of beyond " further articulated in a crucial manner by Christ's revelation? Then how is that God different from the Christian God?

Voegelin treats " Hellenic anthropology " and " Christian anthropology " as equivalent.[15] But is there not also an essential difference between " the Christian order of the soul " and the Socratic or the Platonic? Then which, ultimately, would Voegelin have as our " standard of meaning " in taking up our position against the new worldly divinity? For Professor Molnar, " Voegelin remains a ' Greek,' placing us in the . . . field or force between man and God, but in such a manner that the upward pull remains the *experience* of a force, not more. The One who exerts the pull remains vigorously the Unknown God whom Paul met at Athens. Paul began where Voegelin ends. . . ." Then " Is our ' tension toward the divine ground' anything but the philosopher's *eros*? Is Plato's the last word? "

Surely, as Professor Molnar suggests, God cannot be unknown to the Christian, for He has come in the flesh, not silently but as Teacher of the divine things. Must we then conclude, as even Professor Hallowell does in his editorial preface: " Professor Voegelin's philosophy is, perhaps, best summarized in the Platonic experience of tension " ? [16] Then we could read Voegelin's affirmation of " the life of the spirit and the *bios theoretikos* " as pre-Christian in its formulation even if congruent (in part) with Christianity. And in a passage such as the one in which he argues that " an ethics of the Aristotelian type " and " a spiritual morality of the Christian type " are both beyond the reach of d'Alembert,[17] we should have to understand that the former is the more serious lapse. Thus in Voegelin's early studies of " the problem of meaning in history," we already find him opting more decisively for the *bios theoretikos* of the classical Greek philosophers than for the *vita orantis* of the Christian mystics. From the ideological dogmatism of modernity

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[14] *Modern Age* 19 (Fall, 1975) 427-29.
[15] *From Enlightenment to Revolution,* 88. Cf. 219.
[16] *Ibid.,* viii.
[17] *Ibid.,* 81.

he would return us for the right orientation of life not to the person and teaching of Jesus Christ but to the classical humanists. This would have an important implication, as we shall see, for the interpretation of the modern disease, which may be pathological in terms of the spirit of man, but not heretical (contrary to revealed and subsequently defined truth), unless one is able to view it primarily from the Christian context.

In spite of the important theoretical concessions Voegelin makes to pre-Christian or non-Christian humanism, he often seems to identify himself with a " Christian philosophy of history " which sets " the Christian meaning of history " (" the drama of fall and redemption ") and " the Christian idea of man " (as " concrete human person in the fullness of his dimensions ") in opposition to " the anti-Christian attack on the existence of man," whether in the form of Voltaire's secularized humanism, or Helvétius's " social Satanism," or the still more dangerous excesses of Comte and Marx.[18] In view of what we have just seen, however, we are surely obliged to inquire what these " Christian " ideas mean to Voegelin, for references to them everywhere abound in these early studies when he speaks authoritatively of " the Christian tradition," " the Christian context," " the Christian attitude," " the Christian sense," " the Christian system," " the Christian view of the world," " the Christian hierarchy of existence," or " the Christian answer to the anxiety of existence." [19]

Here are some of the answers Voegelin supplies:

In the Christian philosophy of history . . . the problem of meaning is solved by means of the dichotomy between sacred and profane history. Profane history has no autonomous meaning and the problem of meaning is concentrated in sacred history. Sacred history has meaning insofar as it is a spiritual drama, beginning with the creation of man and ending with the second coming of Christ. The drama is known from the first to the last act and for this reason it is a true line of universal meaning. The drama of salvation has a meaning of human relevance because involved in it is the spiritual destiny of every single human being. . . . The sacred line of meaning which runs through history is inseparable from the meaning which it has for the individual person. Without meaning for . . . the concrete person, there is no meaning in history.[20]

The Christian idea of mankind is the idea of a community whose substance consists of the Spirit in which the members participate; the *homonoia* of the members, their likemindedness through the Spirit that has become flesh in all and each of them, welds them into a universal community of mankind.[21]

[18] *Ibid.*, 91, 94, 70 f.
[19] *Ibid.*, 56, 102, 221, 50, 10, 119.
[20] *Ibid.*, 93 f.
[21] *Ibid.*, 95 f.

So much for " the Christian sacred history." What about " the profane section of the Christian philosophy of history " ? Voegelin insists repeately that " the meaning of history as a whole is inaccessible from the intramundane position." But it does not follow that profane history lacks ' a finite structure of meaning," " a recognizable, meaningful articulation into the finite histories of civilizations and peoples." This meaning " cannot touch the whole of human existence, but it touches very strongly the finite existence in community, as well as the civilizational values of which the community is the carrier." Understanding this finite meaning " enables man to orient himself in his own historical situation."

The structure of history, however, can become a human concern in this sense only if it is understood as the structure of profane history, as a realm of finite meaning. As soon as any part of the profane structure is hypostatized into a process of universal meaning, the finite structure is falsified and orientation becomes impossible. This consequence of an intramundane construction of sacred history is rarely appreciated in its full importance.[22]

Having understood this " Christian " distinction between sacred or transcendent history and profane history, we must now ask how well it assists in Voegelin's analysis of the modern disease and what kind of " Christianity " informs it.

The opening study on Bossuet and Voltaire provides at least part of the answer: " Ecclesiastical " or official Christianity— roughly approximating " the Church "—had in part occasioned the modern rejection of transcendental meaning by blurring the distinction between sacred and profane history.

For Bossuet (and presumably all orthodox Catholic thinkers) " Christianity outside the one, visible Church was inconceivable." The Church alone " preserves and develops the Christian tradition; if the authority of the Church is questioned, the living continuity of Christianity is broken." In assuming that to question the tradition " inevitably will lead to the ultimate questioning of Christianity as a whole," Bossuet thus made himself an enemy of reason and of independent judgment.[23]

Neither was it " sufficiently clear " to de Maistre, Voegelin writes, " that something might be profoundly wrong not only outside Catholicism but within the Church itself." Voegelin goes so far as to liken de Maistre's asertion of the Pope's supremacy to Comte's self-consecration as High Pontiff of the Religion of Humanity, and argues further that the " organizational, projective character " of

[22] *Ibid.*, 100 f.
[23] *Ibid.*, 15 f.

Comte's " dogmatic formulations " and " his ecclesiastical projects "
were "inspired" by "Catholic forms." In short, the kind of
thinking de Maistre represents for Voegelin "blinds the working
of the spirit" (note here the lower-case, which makes one wonder
whether Voegelin is referring to the spirit of the classical humanists
once more, rather than to the Holy Spirit).[24]

The problem of these "ecclesiastical" thinkers, Voegelin con-
cludes, is the problem of " Christianity as a historical phenomenon."
By conceiving of history as " an innerworldly chain of human
events," Bossuet and other " professionals of the faith " came to
understand Christianity " as an event in history." Thus they re-
placed the "dualism of sacred and profane" with a secularized
view in which " Christian religious phenomena " are immanent with-
in the stream ef events. For Voegelin this error is crucial in the
emergence of modernity, for the assertion that a " meaningful con-
struction of history from a secular, intramundane position " is pos-
sible leads to the discrediting of such a " historicized " Christianity
in the eyes of increasingly empirical-minded intellectuals. The
Christian symbols will seem to them irrational and they will invent
others to serve as the basis for human existence in society.[25]

Now the " real issue " in Voegelin's analysis of modernity from
the perspective of " Christian humanism " becomes clear. If the
Church cannot effectively show how civilizational existence is
meaningful, men " will go out in search of gods who take some
interest in their civilizational efforts." The Magisterium of the
Church, having "abandoned its spiritual leadership," is unable to
provide adequate guidance with respect to " the problems of
postmedieval history." No wonder the modern intellectuals (such
as Voltaire) would submit no longer to the authority of the Church.
The ancient symbols " expressive of Christian spiritual life " now
seemed opaque to them. Presumably the " ecclesiastics " lost sight
of their " fundamental spiritual obligation " to help men under-
stand themselves and their place in the universe.[26]

A further presumption is that the classical humanists could never
have committed such a blunder, thus vindicating their superiority
as philosophical guides in the search for meaning in history. Would
it be fair to Voegelin to conclude that for him " Christianity be-
comes historicized and history secularized " to the extent that it
loses or fails to retain a classical spirituality? For somehow the
classical Greek philosophers are more sensitive to the openness of

[24] *Ibid.*, 183 f., 157.
[25] *Ibid.*, 7.
[26] *Ibid.*, 23, 34, 25, 79, 18.

man's " spiritual center " " to the transcendental realissimum " than is " the dogmatism of the Church," now defeated by the Reason and Science of Voltaire and Comte.[27]

In thus contrasting " dogmatic subtleties " with " the substance of the faith " and in showing his sensitivity to " the spiritual drama of salvation which takes place " in " every individual soul," Voegelin makes one think of Protestantism and the " tension between the authority of the Church and the individualism of the reformers." Is Voegelin's Christianity in these early studies, then, a Protestant Christianity? [28]

He does indeed show great respect for independent judgment in matters of faith and for " the autonomous Christian personality." But Voegelin is also critical of the liberal Protestant theology of the nineteenth century " which abolishes original sin and therewith Christ as the Redeemer " ; which " thins out " Christianity to a code of ethics and strips Christ of his divinity, making him simply one of the great teachers of mankind. Moreover, Voegelin asserts that " there is, indeed, an intelligible line of meaning running from Luther's destruction of ecclesiastical authority, through the destruction of dogmatic symbols in the generation of Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and Feuerbach, to the destruction of ' all the gods,' that is, of all authoritative order, in Marx." But " while it would be incorrect to say that the way of Protestantism leads with any inner necessity from Luther to Hegel and Marx, it is true that Marxism is the final product of disintegration in one branch of German, liberal Protestantism." [29]

Where, then, does this leave our attempt to understand Voegelin's meaning of Christianity and its significance in his analysis of the modern ideologies?

For this reviewer, the key to Voegelin's critique of modernity and to his maintenance of a Christian posture while standing apart from Catholic and Protestant Churches lies in the repudiation of " dogma " which has continued to be prominent in his recent thought. It is to be seen, for example, in his preference for the Pauline rather than the Johannine " type " in " the Christian evangelical literature." While John tended to give " an authoritative summary of the creed for the community," Paul's " ecclesiastical statesmanship . . . made the historical situation for his contemporaries meaningful and intelligible." [30] Professor Molnar sug-

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[27] *Ibid.,* 70 f., 13.
[28] *Ibid.,* 34, 71, 96, 15.
[29] *Ibid.,* 11, 219, 18, 70.
[30] *Ibid.,* 125, 22.

gests that Voegelin admires St. Paul not as an apostle of Christianity but as a " liberator " from gnostic derailment.[31]

Moreover, Voegelin's Socratic or classical orientation is evident in his repudiation of the " fallacy " that " truth is to be found in the solution of problems rather than in their discovery " ; that "truth can be dispensed as a body of doctrine." Such "vulgarizing" of " problematic knowledge into dogmatic results " tries to " make the innocent believe that they enter into the truth if they accept faithfully as dogma a proposition which no conscientious thinker would accept without far-reaching qualification." It substitutes instruction for education and destroys intellectual honesty by separating results " from the critical processes which lead up to them." It builds up in the many " the unshakable brutality of ignorant conviction." [32]

This is indeed surprising in one who often professes admiration for St. Augustine. For long before the Bishop of Hippo had elaborated the philosophy of history and civilization which Voegelin often commends, the convert to Christianity had in his early " Platonic " dialogues demonstrated the fruitlessness of a kind of " academic " skepticism which Voegelin's humanism still seems to retain.

But whatever its intellectual ancestry, Voegelin's potent attack on the very idea of Christian doctrine seems wholly unaware that all or large numbers of believers have always felt the need for simplified formulations of the truths of the faith and the catechesis which conveys them to succeeding generations. Would Voegelin replace all that with a doctrinal anarchy which abandons every " autonomous individual " to theological seas where the ebb and flow of spontaneous needs determines the content of belief? Apparently Voegelin was not prepared to go so far in these early studies, for at one point he observes the " average man's " inability to " pull himself up to divinity by his own boot straps." [33]

Perhaps it is simply that Voegelin has come to be so bitter toward the secular dogmas of modern ideologists (Condorcet's gospel of progress provoked his above outburst against dogmatism), that he fails to distinguish between dogmas of religious faith and the pseudo-dogmas of socio-political " faiths." But surely there is a profound difference between them since " critical processes " are not essential to the act of religious faith (though they may prepare for it). In the final analysis, therefore, it may be necessary to say

[31] *Modern Age* 19 (Fall, 1975) 428.
[32] *From Enlightenment to Revolution,* 22, 126 f.
[33] *Ibid.,* 299.

that Voegelin's Christianity is too humanistic, notwithstanding the transcendence of his humanist spirituality.

But whatever the motivation of his antipathy toward credal Christianity, when Voegelin shares with some of the very moderns themselves an attitude subversive of authoritative teaching, and when he joins some of them (Voltaire, for example) in the role of " *defensor humanitatis* against the professionals of the faith," [34] the effectiveness of his critique of modernity is certainly curtailed.

For this reviewer the best demonstration of the inadequacy of Voegelin's early analysis of the nature and magnitude of the contemporary crisis lies in his admitted inability to lead us out of it. But although it seems a part of the responsibility of a *Christian* philosopher of history to find a solution, Voegelin is prevented from doing so by his failure to distinguish between ideological dogma (decayed philosophy) and religious dogma (the formulation of belief). Thus for him, any " solution " would only add to the problem unless it could deal adequately with what he calls " the problem of the institutionalization of the spirit." [35] A part of such a solution "would have to be a new Christian philosophy of history and of mythical symbols," and such a task "would require a new Thomas rather than a neo-Thomist." It would even require a new Paul. Aquinas "embraced systematically what appeared as relevant knowledge within the categories of the Christian view of man in the universe," and apparently without falling into dogmatism, while Paul similarly dealt with the challenges of the beginnings.[36]

Why cannot Voegelin himself qualify as the new Thomas or the new Paul? The early studies in this book suggest that the answer must lie in his imperfect grasp of the faith of Paul and of Thomas. Voegelin writes impressively of " the transcendental God . . . who has become flesh," " is historically present," and " walks personally on earth." But in elaborating what he calls " Christian transcendentalism," Voegelin conceives of " the *logos* " who has become " incarnate " " as a transcendental spirit descending into man." And while he distinguishes " the *logos* in the Christian sense " from Hegel's reason incarnating itself in reality and Marx's program for incarnating the *logos* in the world by means of his revolutionary action, he can nevertheless call Hegel and Schelling " substantially Christian thinkers, . . . however far their ideas diverged from orthodox, dogmatic Christianity." It was apparently

[34] *Ibid.*, 34.
[35] *Ibid.*, 143.
[36] *Ibid.*, 22, 76.

sufficient for these thinkers to be " concerned about the order of their souls " for them to merit the title, " Christian." (Thus even Socrates would be a " Christian," and Voegelin can at last reconcile the two branches of his formula, " humanist and Christian.") [37]

The studies in *From Enlightenment to Revolution* yield further instances of a deficient Christianity: for Voegelin, a Christian knows he is a creature, but not a son of God; the Christian transcends, but he does not pray; the Spirit inspires individuals, but He does not dwell within the authoritative Church, confirming its decisions. In this respect Voegelin does not take to heart his chastisement of Emil Littré for failing to distinguish between the divinity of Christianity and the human corruptions that inevitably find their way into the Church.[38] But as a Christian study of history, or as a study of Christian history, it seems an even more serious indictment of this book that it lacks optimism. There hangs over it a hopeless dread of evils present and anticipated, leading with almost dialectical inevitability to " the end of Western civilization." [39]

In its inability to solve the crisis as well as in its diagnosis of that crisis, Voegelin's work is the product of an age that no longer believes. But if faith is what built up Christian civilization, is it not faith that alone can restore it? Only through a life of faith can the Holy Spirit, the assurance of our hope and filler of our hearts with love, act in the world and dissipate our fear of the gremlins of modernity. Thus Voegelin writes like some of the earliest Christian converts from paganism (Greek philosophy), *Patres*, perhaps, but not yet *Doctores*. They did not fully grasp the intellectual demands of Christian faith but were nevertheless impressed by what they could understand of its " spiritual substance."

Voegelin recognizes that there is much more to Christianity than a " code of ethics " and that Christianity affirms " the reality of evil in man " (for instance, in his critique of Tolstoi [40]). It is true to say that this recognition helps alert him to the essentially religious character of the modern problem. Furthermore, he sees, as one reviewer put it, " that a ' scientific ' reason which denies cognitive value to spiritual experience cannot adequately ground morality." [41] But does he really " *explode* the leading political dogmas and ideologies of our time," [42] or does he make them more

[37] *Ibid.*, 161 f., 267, 275 f., 199.
[38] *Ibid.*, 143.
[39] *Ibid.*, 98.
[40] *Ibid.*, 219 f.
[41] Miles Morgan, *The Journal of Politics* 38 (Feb., 1976) 191.
[42] Dante Germino, *loc. cit.*

difficult to deal with by confusing them with their most potent adversary—authoritative Christian doctrine?

While Voegelin has expertly diagnosed our disorder, he is an inadequate and perhaps even a misleading guide to the order which can save us. The imperfections in his understanding of Christianity and his apparent inability to see its essential differentiation from Hellenic transcendence leave him less than competent for the task he already began to set for himself in these early studies: to prepare " a new Christian philosophy of history and of mythic symbols." [43] For the accomplishment of such a task, surely something more is needed than Voegelin's prodigious ability to analyze the primary source materials of modern ideological madness. His mind is a great one, but no man's mind is so great that it must not halt, when left to its own devices, before the mysteries of Christian faith—and doctrine.

JOHN A. GUEGUEN

Illinois State University
Bloomington, Illinois

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[43] *From Enlightenment to Revolution,* 22.

GILKEY'S *REAPING THE WHIRLWIND*:

A REVIEW ARTICLE *

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I

LANGDON GILKEY OF the University of Chicago is an interestingly eclectic American theologian whose thought has been developing in an explicit dialogue with other theologians and scholars beyond theology—not only philosophers but historians and a variety of social scientists as well. He is "eclectic" in the creative sense of that adjective, fusing and synthesizing elements from Whitehead and Heidegger, Tillich and Niebuhr with elements from Ernst Bloch and the current Liberation theologians. Gilkey stands in a tradition native to the study of divinity at the University of Chicago with its strong emphasis on the social matrices of religious thought.

His oeuvre has been growing steadily for almost twenty years. It now consists of three major works—*Maker of Heaven and Earth* (1959), *Naming the Whirlwind* (1969) and this latest, *Reaping the Whirlwind* (1976)—plus two smaller more specialized studies, *Religion and the Scientific Future* (1970) and *Catholicism Confronts Modernity* (1975), and a number of articles and reviews. *Maker of Heaven and Earth,* developed from a doctoral dissertation, was done in the classic magisterial style of modern theology. It is an excellent study of the doctrine of creation and an updating of it in the light of contemporary philosophy and the sciences. It was to be followed by a sister-volume doing the same with the doctrines of providence and eschatology. But the theological turmoil of the 60s—the "secularity" boom and the God-Is-Dead phenomenon—hit Gilkey broadside, intellectually, and forced him, as he tells us, into writing a sort of book he had not really planned on writing: *Naming the Whirlwind.* This work is a re-consideration of the very foundations of theology and theological language. Against the reductionistic claims of the secularizers and morticians of deity, it offered a phenomenological defense of "transcendence," arguing for certain "ultimate dimensions" found inevitably even in modern secular experience.

Reaping the Whirlwind bears very much the genetic marks of its two predecessors. It exhibits the concern with theological updating seen in the first, and the close attention to the unsettled state of dogmatics seen in the second. There has been, though, a noticeable decrease in clarity of arrangement and structure when we compare *Reaping* with the two earlier works. It is a very densely packed text, with not a few sentences overloaded like this one:

> In turn the relation between actuality and possibility, the synthesis of past, present and future into self-creative event, is the most fundamental role of providence, through its creative power moving each achieved actuality, each given, into the role of a destiny for self-actualizing freedom, and then presenting to each present, in the light of that destiny, novel but relevant possibilities for its future. (p. 285)

In addition there has been an enormous swelling of the footnote apparatus. A subtextual discussion, gathered together into no less than 110 pp. of endnotes at the back of the book, constitutes virtually an opusculum in itself. Compare this with the brief and infrequent footnotes found in the works of Niebuhr or Tillich who did " social " and " cultural " theology but a generation ago. Even Gilkey's earlier books had less subtextual discussion. This increase is, possibly, the result of an imperfect digestion of material. More probably, however, it is due to the stepped-up rate of production—the theological journal-and-information explosion—and increasing complexity of issues raised in dogmatics, both Protestant and Catholic, after the 60's. Gilkey is a master of an ever-sprawling literature which resists a magisterial tidying up.

Despite its densities, then, and other related *inconvenientiae*, *Reaping the Whirlwind* is an important theological study. It is not written, of course, for the lay public or for the parish clergy; it is to be read by theologians and other scholars who will debate its theses. Gilkey is extraordinarily generous in the space he gives to the views of others, both theologians and non-theologians. Almost a third of the main text—100 out of 319 pages plus most of the 110 pages of endnotes—are devoted to a nuanced and detailed analysis of other theories and approaches. The analysis ranges from historical fine points—Augustine and Calvin on nature, grace and freedom; and Schleiermacher and Ritschl on history and providence—to current methodological differences between Gilkey and Fr. David Tracy in the relating of experience to symbol and ontology.

As a result of this generosity Gilkey takes rather a long time to set the stage for the presentation of his own *sententiae*. Functionally, despite a tri-partite schema, the volume falls into two parts: an examination of contemporary philosophical and scientific views of history and historical interpretation, and the problems

of " progress " and " meaning " in history. This first part then culminates in Gilkey's own views here. The second half presents a discussion of Christian theological interpretations of history, providence and eschatology. And, again, it culminates in Gilkey's proposed revisions of doctrine on these loci.

The conceptualizing is always sensitive, careful and guarded as it explores alternatives before settling on a thesis. And it is usually—if not always (cf. below)—rigorous when rigor is needed. Interspersed into it are striking examples of phenomenological descriptions of everyday American experience, even banal and homely experience, both individual and social in the 60's and 70's. In illustrating high-level conceptual points with low-level examples, Gilkey attempts to write on both an abstract and a concrete plane. We find passages like this:

> Thus appear those twin modes of understanding history's mysteries, which, as is so often the case, seem to each other to be antithetical but from a wider perspective are clearly siblings. These siblings are, first, speculative philosophy of history that seeks to uncover by reflective thought the a priori, rational order or pattern of a changing social process, and, secondly, social science insofar as it seeks to uncover by empirical investigation the universal or natural laws or patterns characteristic of every society at the various stages of its development. (p. 6)

But we also run across references to Viet Nam, ecology, the oil shortage, the " tyrannical " television " set " in " the family den," commuter trains—and a passage like this:

> Will the landscapes of the future technological society be filled not only with dreary stretches of similar Dairy Dips and look-alike cottages, but also more and more with look-alike consumers inside? (p. 13)

This is not quite what one expects to find in an " academic-systematic " theologian. Certainly we do not find such " dippings down " in a Niebuhr or a Tillich, a Barth or even a Heidegger or a Rahner. But, then, Gilkey's life experience, which included World War II internment by the Japanese in China, described in his *Shantung Compound* (1964), is not the usual curriculum vitae of an academic. It seems to have sensitized him to the often unpleasant *concreta* of daily life. (And yet, curiously—as will be noted later on—this everyday phenomenology is not extended down into the theologically untutored levels of Christian life today.)

II

Chapters 1 and 2 are set adversatively to each other. Ch. 1 deals with the turmoil and " travail " of social change in western

industrial nations: the class tensions, the increasing depersonaliza-
tion of life and the anxieties caused by anomie, by an " open "
future and the loss of western European and American geo-political
dominance over the former colonial world. Ch. 2, in a sense, tries
to balance the picture by pointing out certain abiding things which
are surviving the turmoil: certain experiences and " dimensions "
of " ultimacy " and " sacrality," of community and moral responsi-
bility, and the quest for " meaning " in life and in history. These
themes have been brought over by Gilkey from his defense of
" Transcendence " set forth in *Naming the Whirlwind.*

The stage is then set for a survey of contemporary secular views
of history and the problem of its interpretation and possible
" meaning." Several options are examined: the " New Aeon " and
" New Seers " group of enthusiastic scientists and others, like Her-
man Kahn, who are optimistic about a technological future for
mankind; and, opposed to them, the " New Nightmare " writers
like Robert Heilbroner who foresee only decline and doom for a
greedy mankind on a shrinking earth. Among the philosophers are
empirical-positivists like Karl Popper and Carl Hempel who deny
any " cognitive " approach to historical flux and hence any verifi-
able " meaning " in or for history; and opposed to them are ra-
tionalist metaphysicians like the humanistic Marxist Ernst Bloch
with his concept of " hope," and Whitehead whose process and
divinity concepts have relevance for the interpretation of history.
Gilkey rejects the naive optimism of " New Aeon " thought and
Marxism and even that of Whitehead's system qua rationalistic
system. The unrelieved pessimism of the " New Nightmare " vision
is also rejected. Gilkey accepts the elements of hopefulness and
moral responsibility he finds in these various secular views. But
he judges them to be vulnerable because they do not recognize
the human need for a " transcendent " dimension of experience.
He is, finally, most impressed by the possibilities of Whitehead's
approach but finds it in need of a religious deepening in regard
to the " facts " of sin and tragedy in history. Whitehead must be
corrected by Niebuhr.

Gilkey's own position is a long spun-out and sometimes over-
lapping set of theses. The basic *sententia* underlying all others is
that

to be human in time is to be immersed in temporal passage and so within its fun-
damental changes. This changing social world sets for us the ' situation ' in which
the deepest personal, ethical and religious issues of our existence arise: it tempts
us, challenges us and calls forth from us our political projects. And yet to be human
in time is, by the same token, also to transcend that passage so as to be aware

of it, to fear or rejoice in it, to seek to know and to understand it, to judge it and to act upon it for the future. Human history is thus qualified essentially by the ontological structure of destiny and freedom. (p. 121)

For Gilkey the social experience of man in history is a more fundamental and more real source of a modern ontology than are the cycles and regularities of nature on which ancient and medieval ontologies were constructed. The past, with its content as carried into the present, constitutes what Gilkey calls " destiny "—an interestingly retroactive use of the term. The human ability to act for the future within this present context constitutes " freedom." He finds that a phenomenological analysis of " the mystery of history " yields this polarity of destiny-freedom as the basic " ontological structure " of history, the structure of man's historical experience. This polarity leads to the deeper and wider metaphysical polarity of actuality-possibility. Gilkey declares that polarity to be a " fundamental puzzle " in experience, and he follows Whitehead in wondering about " how possibility can be if it is not related to actuality? " and " if possibility is wider than actuality, how is there order "—and not just randomness—" in the transition from actuality to possibility? " Rejecting Aristotle's notion of " potentiality " as already somehow existing in the actual, he sees the " possible " as really new, really novel. How account for the orderly transition from the actual to the novel? He finds the answer in a Tillichian concept of God as the " ground " or " context " of the transition, the " grounding unity " below both actuality and possibility.

This theistic analysis of historical experience, Gilkey freely concedes, is not " provable " in the scientific or " hard " philosophical sense. But he purports to be able to show in a " prolegomenon " that the experience of history contains both the experience of some degree of " structure " and a dimension of " ultimacy." These, he says, are best interpreted in religious and specifically theistic categories of " God " and " sin," " fate," redemption and the like. He grants that such categories are not themselves derivable from historical experience, and yet they explain it best. They can be shown to be, if not " provable," at least " intelligible "—and in two ways: (1) all the alternative explanations, whether empirical-positivist or metaphysical-rational, are " inadequate." (Gilkey's epistemology is, au fond, pragmatic-functional, something of a theological version of the " saving of appearances " concept in the history of science.) (2) A theistic interpretation of history is " true " because it is " adequate " to the " facts " of historical experience; it " provides a set of symbols adequate for a creative existence and an

understanding of many facets of history's mystery." The criterion for philosophical and theological " truth," then, is not provability—in the sense of rigorously, logically excluding all other possibilities—but rather a " coherence of fundamental concepts and an adequacy to the facts of existence." Gilkey engages in a discussion of current hermeneutic and methodological issues about myth, symbol and the levels of " meaning " in modern theology, and concludes that symbols and myths—images of and " stories " about the transcendent in non-transcendent terms—are the inevitable and appropriate modes to express the otherwise inexpressible religious sense of the ultimate, the sacral and the transcendent.

III

The more formally doctrinal or dogmatic portion of the book begins with a discussion of various Christian views of history, providence and eschatology: the " classical " view of Augustine and Calvin with its timeless God Who predestines all in history in order to save some and reprobate others; the 19th century Liberalism of Schleiermacher and Ritschl with its smoothly evolving history-as-providence culminating in Christ and the Christian experiential order in which all finally participate; the " Krisis " or Neo-orthodox theology of Barth and Bultmann which centers exclusively on the individual's existential encounter with the Gospel, and for which outer socio-political history, though under the " hidden " rule of God, is religiously unimportant for the Christian; and finally *la nouvelle vague* in dogmatics, the semi-Marxianizing " futurist-apocalyptic " theologies of political " liberation "—as seen in Moltmann, Pannenberg, Metz and others—which posit God not in the present but as " the power of the future " influencing current socio-political struggles, and which harshly reject the existential " pietism " of Neo-orthodox thought.

The " classic " view of providence and eschatology he finds to be, formally, the most correct because it is the most fully balanced. It stressed the " sovereignty " of God over history as directed and defined by His eschatological goal. The work of providence concerned itself very much with the " external " or " objective " events, natural and historical, cosmic and social, in which men and women lived. God worked not as an " external cause " but in and through creatures. Thus, providence was " not against " human freedom and was " not contradicted " by sin. Rather, it was made " necessary " by sin. All these classical insights remain " true." But they must be retrieved from an ontological framework which is inade-

quate to " modern historical experience " and therefore false. The classical view of providence explicated all truths in terms of an " absolute," immutable, omnipotent God and thus led to a concept of foreknowledge and fore-ordination of all events, and to an exclusively supra-historical goal which excluded real meaning from history.

Gilkey's effort is to re-interpret traditional doctrines in the light of " modern historical consciousness." This must be done since the " absolutism " of the classical view collides with " our engrained sense of history and of ourselves." We are " saturated with a sense of the contingency of events " and are highly sensitized to the finite factors which we necessarily interpret in a " naturalistic " manner. We are only too aware of the " relativity " of all " that appears on the surface of history," and of the transiency of things. In addition, modern man feels utterly free. Indeed, Gilkey declares, " our sense of autonomy as humans practically defines modern historical consciousness." Hence, the action of God in history cannot be understood by us in classical terms. How, then, can God be understood to be a " cause " and an " actor " in history? How is this old concept to be modernized? Gilkey finds three levels of historical causation and action: communities both as physical and as spiritual entities with fundamental cultural symbols; a " shared eros " or sense of common values and notions of the meaning of life within the community; and the moral impulses and ethical ideals of a community. These three levels constitute, for Gilkey, the inheritance, the given or the " destiny " in which individual " centered " human decisions and therefore " freedom " can occur.

In the light of this socio-anthropological analysis, rather severe re-interpretation of the sovereignty of God is necessary. The Old Testament " symbol " of " God in history " is declared to be the prime one here because of its experientially validated " dialectic of the hidden divine work in history." Yet the re-interpretation of this symbol requires that all things occur naturally—and not supernaturally—through created causes. The divine causation can never be immediate. The " providence " of God is discerned dimly as " the inspirer of values " and as " the context of our meanings." History and, indeed, all of experienced reality is a " process " in which the divine carries forth the past and its " destiny " into the present, and so forms the context of man's future-oriented freedom. God transcends the process of history in that He is the "creative source" of its " being " and " creativity." In effect, He creates self-creating creatures. At this point Gilkey avows himself dissatisfied with Whitehead's notion of a " creativity " somehow other than and

more " primordial " than the divine. As a Christian, he holds, not surprisingly, that the notion of " creativity " must be subsumed under the concept of the divine transcendence. The transcendent source of being and creativity is divine " providence " which preserves the completed past in the present as " destiny " and is thus the " ground " or " context " of the " possible "—those " not yet forms." Providence is God's " envisionment, grading and valuation of possibilities."

To describe this immanent function of the divine, Gilkey retrieves the classical " logos " concept. But in its updated form, the " logos," the divine " word " is " not a timeless, static rational structure," the " logos " of classical theology. Rather, it is " the active process of divine envisionment and ordering of the vast and infinite realm of possibilities." Using notions borrowed from Whitehead and Bloch, Gilkey concludes that by " participating " in the divine " logos of envisionment " humans apprehend the possibilities which are relevant to their " kairos," their particular historical situation. Thus, " providence " as the " logos " is the ground of human freedom and creativity. Though ultimately God is one, He is also, in some way, two-fold or " di-polar " in the standard process sense. As " being " God is the source and continuing ground of the flux and becoming of actuality, and thus He forms human " destiny." As " logos " He is the ground of human possibilities and thus the " limit and ordering " of man's future. Again, the " logos " is " the subjective aim " of God's " primordial envisionment." And " providence " is " the sustaining and creating work of God within the ambiguity of historical life that leads to the divine eschatological fulfillment."

Man is utterly free. Gilkey cannot overstress that point. Man's will is not under any sort of divine control. God is not " the sole actor " in history. Freedom, a real independence from the divine, is necessary to " autonomous " man and is simply required by " modern historical consciousness," if the future is to be really future, that is, later in time, novel and creative—and not simply an unfolding of the eternal divine ideas and will.

This, then, is the basic conceptual framework of Gilkey's argumentation. On it are strung the secondary theses and from it are drawn the final conclusions. Indeed, they are dictated by it.

IV

The utter freedom of man and the modern stress on autonomy mean a " self-limiting " God and that " grace " is not causally controlling; grace is " illumining," " healing," " reconciling "—and quite

resistible. Man's freedom is inevitably " abused," however, and so man inevitably sins. Hence, the inevitable " self-estrangement " of man in history and of history itself. Human freedom therefore rules out any " perfect " realization of " the Kingdom of God " on earth. There can be at best partial and precarious approaches to it. Marxianizing theologians should re-read Niebuhr. Moreover, men, including Christians, can never achieve a total or exhaustive " cognitive " understanding of history, but only a partial knowledge relative to their limited " kairos."

The real futurity and the ontic novelty of the future necessarily mean that the future is just as much future and new for God as it is for creatures. Hence—and here process theory takes over completely—God is " temporal " in some sense. He, too " experiences the passage of time." This is required by process theory since, according to Whitehead's celebrated *sententia,* the divine is " not an exception to the metaphysical rules." In one of its two polarities, then, God's " essence " is " not accidentally " but " essentially related " to the flux of time and history—even though in the other polarity He " transcends " them.

There are further theses of a more specifically Christian nature. The " logos " illumines and reconciles universally but the historical core of its illumining and reconciling work occurs " in Jesus Christ Who conquers the estrangement of sin and death " and thus furnishes the revelatory clue for the entire work of the logos in history. As he moves, with increasing rapidity to the end of his volume, Gilkey moves beyond his topic proper and tries to relate it to the New Testament Trinitarian schema: God as " being " transcendent to and grounding process is " the Father " ; as " logos " immanent to, illumining and guiding process, He is " the Son " ; as " love " specially manifested in the " logos " of Christ's " incarnation, passion, death and resurrection," He is " the Spirit."

As for eschatology both individual and social, it is the standard process eschatology: eternal life is to become an " object " of the on-going divine consciousness and memory forever. There is no damnation or reprobation because there is no distinction between the saved and the lost. To damn any human would be against " the agape " of the New Testament. All that is of value in individual and social life is saved by being " remembered " by God. All that is not of value is also " remembered " by Him but in such a way that it is " negated " by Him. And every individual life, presumably, contains some elements of both. Gilkey ends then by asserting a universalism similar to that taught by Barth for whom the whole human race and all individuals in it are " elect " in Jesus

Christ. This Barthian thesis Gilkey embraces as more "authentically Calvinist" than the view of Calvin!

V

The difficulties which non-process theologians have with process thought are obvious enough, and we need not labor them much here. The concept of God's omnipotence can be harmonized in one way or another with the notion of His self-limitation. But it is difficult to reconcile the classical concepts of infinity, simplicity and eternity with concepts of temporality, duration, di-polarity and mutability. Like all process thinkers, Gilkey rejects, of course, the Hellenistic predilection for the absolute otherness and unknowability of God. He and they prefer their own conceptions of the divine relatedness and hence the partial knowability of the the divine relatedness and hence the partial knowability of the divine. It is, we suppose, finally a question of what we choose to make normative for a theo-ontology: man's experience of himself as a creature or his experience of the need to posit an "ultimate" indescribable in terms of any human or any spatio-temporal experience. From the classical point of view, it is extremely difficult to see the "process deity" as truly in-finite, eternal and simple. Hence, it is difficult to conceive of Him as absolutely ultimate. From the process point of view, however, it is no doubt equally hard to relate the classical God-concept to man's emotional experiences, individual and social, and thus to biblical language. This is one of the great division-lines in modern theology, and our assessment of Gilkey's *sententiae* here will depend in good part on which side we stand. Is the process-God with His di-polarity and His temporal experience more "credible" to "modern man" than is the classical timeless concept of deity? This reviewer frankly doubts it. The classical view which passes through the purification of the *via negativa* seems metaphysically clearer, simpler, more elevated—in sum, a more satisfyingly ultimate concept, despite—or possibly because of—its distance from finite experience.

There are, of course, other questions beyond this fundamental one. Is a self-limiting God "in control" of creation and history? Or is such a "control" a dispensable concept? Is God able or unable to bring history to the conclusions that He wills? Can he be actually frustrated by free creatures? The Augustinian and other types of classical thought had a firm answer to these questions. Gilkey does not seem to. And there are still further questions: when Gilkey, in the process manner, describes God as "envisioning" and even "experiencing" temporal passage, in what sense are we

to take such human-sounding verbs? In his *Maker of Heaven and Earth* (pp. 70 f.) he criticized the Thomistic " analogical " use of " being " and " cause " for giving those terms meanings which they do not carry in ordinary philosophical parlance about finitude. Now the very same question can be put to Gilkey, especially in the light of his epistemological claim that all of " transcendent " God-language is " symbolic." When he speaks of God as " envisioning " and " experiencing," what is the real ontic referent of such terms? Are they merely helpful—and, indeed, inevitable—anthropomorphic terms about a reality which, *in se*, remains utterly unknowable by us? I. e., do we have—tacitly—something not unlike a process equivalent of " analogy," though not as carefully set forth? Reading Gilkey we are not sure what to conclude at this point. Can process language about the divine essence be read as " agnostically " as this? (The late Daniel Day Williams, a leading process writer, when asked that question by this reviewer in a seminar, replied— no. Whitehead's process concepts, he said, are not to be taken as merely symbolic, and certainly not as regulative concepts in the Kantian style. They are to be taken realistically, in some sense *ad litteram,* since God is not exempt from the metaphysical rules governing process.)

If this is so, we wonder if process terms applied to divinity and to creatures are applied in some univocal sense, with God as simply quantitatively greater than creatures? Gilkey does not enter into this kind of " scholastic " discussion in *Reaping the Whirlwind,* so it is impossible to guess what his reply to such questions would be. Yet it is also impossible not to raise them here. To be sure, Gilkey seems not to be a " strict " process thinker, but an eclectic who can use such an anti-process term as " substance " in his discourse: " There is a correlation between the modes of existence, of being, activity and effectiveness, of substance and causality . . ." (p. 39). Still even an eclectic user of process theory ought to set forth his view on the relationship between " symbolic " process language and its divine " object." But Gilkey does not really explicate it.

Soteriological problems cluster about the concepts of " grace " and of Christian and secular knowing. If grace is, as Gilkey says, " illumining " but not causative of decisions, if it is, as he says, quite resistible by the will, how then are conversions or adoptions of Christian faith to be explained? How account for the transition from secular unbelief to faith in the Christ by some but not by others? Gilkey says nothing here either, though he might perhaps reply that no explanation—other than unacceptably predestinarian ones—are possible since free human decisions are mysteries un-

fathomable by rational conceptualizing. But not even this much is said.

Again, if the "logos" is universal, why is there a *unique* fullness of it in Jesus Christ? Is there any rational-experiential grounding for that faith-assertion or is it just a leap of faith, an arbitrary emotional committment by some? Again, if all are saved why are only some conscious of it? The abandonment of the classical causative theory of grace takes with it a whole set of ready classical answers to these questions. And they are not replaced by anything very clear. Also—and more curiously—why is the redemptive "Incarnation" given not to the "logos" but to the "spirit"? Granted the occasional Pauline blurring of "Lord" and "Spirit," still, following John's Prologue, theologians have normally given the Incarnation to the Logos.

In eschatology, if eternal life is "objective"—a being "remembered" by God—how does this relate to "subjective" or finite conscious participation in it? Is that simply excluded (as Charles Hartshorne and John Cobb seem to hold), or is it, as Tillich suggested, also included in eternal life though in some changed and as yet unknowable form? There are no clear answers or suggestions here.

Another problem is more pervasive through the book. Though he is interested in the broad social dimension of Christianity, Gilkey seems, au fond, not clear as to exactly whom he is writing about. Most of the time he speaks simply of what "modern man" feels or what "modern historical consciousness" requires. Every so often, though, he severely qualifies that and refers to "at least" those who "participate in" contemporary "intellectual" culture and scholarship, i. e., the upper middle class and the intelligentsia—a rather small minority, sociologically, when set next to the vast mass of people of high school education or less. How far down does modern "naturalism" go with its "relativistic" consciousness and its sense of culture-shock and anomie? (While reading Gilkey, I happened to see in the window of a Christian Science reading room a sign which proclaimed the message: "Undisturbed by Change" and promised that Mrs. Eddy's timeless wisdom would make one immune from the shallow turmoil of the world today.)

The phenomena of a tranquil pietism and an "un-modern" Christianity, of the "Jesus People" on leading college campuses, of the growth of conservative churches and charismatic groups, and of a recrudescent literalism in eschatology—these "supernatural" currents are also parts of the Christian socio-cultural scene of the 1960's and 70's. One wonders how Gilkey would interpret such obvious holdovers from the "classical" world. He does, to be sure, cite

(pp. 80f. and 355f.) an interesting prophecy by Heilbroner that the increasingly gloomy material future for man on earth will lead to a new " supernaturalist " and " authoritarian " religious culture. But he does not seem much impressed with the probability of such an unpleasant prospect. Hence, he does not really discuss what a development like that might mean or a " modern " theological theory of providence and eschatology.

We might, finally, cavil also over a few minor historical points: whether Augustine's concept of the divine " permission " for man to sin and Calvin's idea of the divine " ordination " of man to sin are really so far apart—especially since Calvin himself considers the term " permission " to be a mere euphemism for ordination (*Inst.* 3, 23, 8). And again whether Calvin thinks (*Inst.* 2, 5, 14) of created " natures " and faculties as quite so unfixed under the divine will as Gilkey sometimes seems to suggest.

All objections and questions aside, however, *Reaping the Whirlwind* is a major new study which is now finding its way into current theological discussion and on to reading lists in seminaries and departments of religious studies where it will deservedly have a productive career.

CHARLES STINSON

Dartmouth College
Hanover, New Hampshire

BOOK REVIEWS

The Origin of Christology. By C. F. D. MOULE. Cambridge University
Press, 1977. £7.50.

In this book Professor Moule develops a thesis which will be of con-
siderable interest to specialists in New Testament studies and which might
well have important implications for christological discussion in general.
A fashionable explanation of the way various beliefs about Christ originated
is that, as the Christian movement spread beyond Palestine, ideas emerged
which were derived from the religious beliefs of the various environments
in which the new faith progressively took root. Professor Moule terms
this theory 'evolution': the new ideas are comparable, by analogy, with
the evolution of new species in biological evolution. In contrast, he himself
expounds a theory of 'development.' Beliefs about Christ in the New
Testament are better accounted for 'as insights, of varying depth, into
what was there in Jesus, than as the result of increasing distance from
him.'

He begins with a discussion of the application to Jesus of the terms Son
of Man, Son of God, and Christ. He argues that Jesus took the phrase
Son of Man from Dan. 7 and used it to symbolise his own vocation which
he called his followers to share: it stood for God's martyr people who would
ultimately be vindicated, and whose 'centre and growing-point' Jesus
himself was to be. The term is thus corporate or collective, as T. W.
Mason claimed. At this point, however, one wonders whether sufficient
justice has been done to the case against a corporate interpretation of
Son of Man. Most occurrences more readily suggest an individual reference,
and Jesus's actual allusions to Dan. 7:13 tend to suggest that he had
'individualised' the corporate Danielic symbol. In Mk. 13:26-27 the Son
of Man will gather together his elect, and so is distinguished from them,
and in Mk. 14:62 Jesus has just spoken of himself in the first person
singular. Be that as it may, Professor Moule further argues that the
Danielic Son of Man can also be regarded as the messianic Son of God,
since the bestowal of dominion upon him could be interpreted in terms of
Ps. 2, and that Jesus accepted the title of Christ, but understood it as
signifying a destiny of suffering and service.

Next there is an extensive discussion of the title Lord. This is especially
valuable, as it presents us with a clear and succinct account of the latest
linguistic findings in this area and draws out their implications. The argu-
ment is directed against the theory that, when the Christian faith spread
to the hellenistic world, the linguistic shift from Aramaic to Greek brought

with it a major theological change from the invocation of Jesus as Master to the acclamation of him as the divine Lord who is the object of worship. Investigation of the use of the Aramaic *mare* and the Hebrew *adon* shows the presence of a linguistic bridge, rather than a linguistic gulf, between these words and the Greek *kurios*, since all three could be applied to God as well as to man. In terms of quality, they are not far apart, and the invocation of Jesus was not far from his acclamation. It is also argued that belief in the cosmic lordship of Christ may have arisen from the discovery of 'his absolute aliveness beyond death.' This last point, unfortunately, is left rather vague, since we are not told what this experience was really like.

In the second major section of the book, the author deals with the phenomenon of belief in 'the corporate Christ,' found primarily in the Pauline literature. An illuminating discussion of the phrase 'in Christ' (and 'in the Lord') shows that in at least some passages it has a locative sense, and that the locative sense is significant because it indicates 'a more than individualistic conception of the person of Christ.' The experience of Christ as 'an inclusive, all-embracing presence' means that he is 'beginning to be described in terms appropriate to nothing less than God himself.' There is also an interesting treatment of Paul's use of *soma* when applied to the church. Rather unexpectedly, it emerges that this is not of great importance in relation to the concept of the corporate Christ. Except in a very few occurrences, *soma* does not mean 'a transcendent and inclusive Body of Christ himself,' but is simply a metaphor for the community. This section contains a great deal of valuable exegesis, but leaves a few unanswered questions. What exactly is meant by experiencing 'an inclusive, all-embracing presence'? And if it was like a theist's experience of God, what gave it a specifically *christological* content? Further chapters deal with writers other than Paul, with the doctrine of the death of Christ, and with the fulfillment theme; Jesus was believed to have fulfilled the Scriptures because, in the (unspecified) experience of his followers, he had been found to embody the ideal relationship with God which had all along been intended for Israel.

The result of the investigation is that the conceptions of Christ in the New Testament are not due to the creative imagination of the church. On the contrary, they are 'true' to the person of Jesus himself, and spring from contact with him. There is continuity between the church's experience and the historical Jesus.

Many readers of the book will probably feel (with the author himself) that this assertion of continuity is its most significant theme, and will want to ask how valid it is. It is not entirely easy to give an answer, since one cannot always be certain what kind of process is in mind. There are at least three possibilities, and the form of expression sometimes suggests

one, sometimes another. It could be that Jesus's followers recollected his own beliefs about himself, accepted them as true because of their conviction that God had raised him from the dead, and proceeded to use and develop them. There could be a connexion of this kind between Jesus's belief that his destiny was reflected in Dan. 7 and the church's conviction that he fulfilled the Scriptures. But is there any link with the Pauline 'corporate Christ'? It is by no means certain that Jesus used Son of of Man in a corporate sense, and in any case Paul's Christ is never presented as the Danielic Son of Man. The second possibility (closely allied to the first) is that the religious experiences of the first Christians were in some way congruous with the ideas of the historical Jesus: conscious or subconscious awareness of his beliefs gave content to the experiences upon which their christology was based. The difficulty here is that we are given no detailed account of what we may presume these experiences to have been like. If their nature remains obscure, then so does the validity of the theory. The third possibility is different in kind from the first two. It is that the ground of continuity is Christ himself, who taught his followers about his destiny during his incarnate existence, and after Easter communicated an understanding of his nature of them through the guidance of the Spirit. One suspects that it is this third possibility which Professor Moule really wishes to maintain. But it is much more difficult to validate than the other two. It requires the establishment of the objective reality of the Easter and post-Easter experiences of Christ, a task which Professor Moule does not here attempt. He refers us to his earlier book, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament*. But the point is surely crucial enough to demand repetition in the present work (which does, in fact, contain a fair amount of repetition of earlier discussion). It seems, therefore, that the case for continuity is only partially proved. This certainly does not mean that it is mistaken, however. Any unanswered questions which have emerged in the course of this review are raised in the hope that Professor Moule will answer them for us, and with the intention of continuing the christological debate.

MARGARET E. THRALL

University College of North Wales
    Bangor, Wales

Studies in Maimonides and St. Thomas Aquinas. (*Bibliotheca Maimonidica*:
Texts, Studies and Translations of Maimonidean Thought and Scholar-
ship, Vol. I).) Selected with an Introduction and Bibliography by
JACOB I. DIENSTAG. [New York,] Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1975.
Pp. lix + 350. $25.00.

This anthology of twenty articles (including five in German and three
in French) consists for the most part in comparative treatments of
Maimonides and Thomas. All twenty articles have previously appeared,
and more than a few of them will be familiar to those working in the
field. They are photographically reproduced in this anthology, with their
original headings, original page numbers, and varying type faces, and con-
sequently the book's physical appearance does not make a pleasant im-
pression on the reader. In his Preface, the editor says that his purpose
in reproducing these articles and collecting them into a book is " to pro-
vide background material for a more specialized phase of Thomist scholar-
ship." But more than half these articles were first published before 1939
(one of them is in fact from the nineteenth century), and only six of them
are from the 1960's and 1970's. In a field such as medieval philosophy,
which has been exploding with new discoveries even within the last twenty
years, articles that antedate the Second World War are bound to contain
more than a little outdated scholarship. In this sense, perhaps the majority
of these articles are more likely to mislead an unwary reader than to pro-
vide useful and reliable background information for specialists in any
area of medieval philosophy. In another sense, of course, they remain
a monument to the direction and progress of scholarly work on Maimonides
and Thomas and will no doubt continue to be of value to those with an
interest in the history of twentieth-century scholarship on medieval philoso-
phy.

Dienstag's introduction to the volume consists in an alphabetical series
of biographical entries for various Greek and Arabic predecessors of
Maimonides. Many of the entries concentrate on Maimonides's relation
to the philosopher or writer being discussed in that entry—what Maimonides
knew of the man's work, where he cites him, and so on. Each entry is
accompanied by a short bibliography, which frequently reflects the entry's
emphasis on Maimonides; the bibliography for Alexander of Aphrodisias,
for example, begins with " Pines, Introduction to *The Guide of the Per-
plexed,* lxiv-lxxiv." The entries are generally sound, if somewhat subject
to the perhaps unavoidable oversimplification which accompanies short
summaries of major authors, but the reader may be a bit startled to learn
that the Themistius who wrote commentaries on Aristotle was " Emperor
of the East " (p. lviii) some thirty-five to forty-eight years after his
floruit, during a period generally assigned to the Emperor Arcadius.

The editorial principles behind the ordering of the articles in the volume are not easily discernible; apart from a general grouping according to the language in which the articles are written, they are not apparently ordered in any way—not according to subject matter or date of initial publication or even alphabetically by authors' last names. In the interest of cogency, I will here divide the articles into groups according to subject matter and then discuss in detail the articles within each of the groups. All the articles in one way or another compare Maimonides and Thomas, but they emphasize different points of similarity or dissimilarity. The first, fourth, and ninth articles in the anthology concentrate on divine attributes and man's knowledge of them. The second article in the volume has to do with immortality of the soul. The largest group of articles (articles three, seven, ten through fifteen, seventeen, and twenty) consist in general discussions of Jewish influence on Latin scholasticism or particular treatments of Maimonides's influence on Thomas. Several of these articles also include a comparison of the two philosophers on divine attributes. The fifth and the eighth articles have to do with political philosophy and social doctrine. The eternity of the world is the focus of the sixth article, and man's position and status in the universe occupies the sixteenth article. And the last group of articles consists in two, the eighteenth and the nineteenth, which compare Maimonides and Thomas on essence and existence.

The first two of the articles dealing with divine attributes are both solid pieces of scholarly work. Wolfson's " St. Thomas on Divine Attributes," the first of these two, is well-known. It discusses the various Thomistic interpretations of divine attributes and does source analysis for each of the different interpretations, paying special attention to Maimonides's views and influence. Seymour Feldman's "A Scholastic Misinterpretation of Maimonides' Doctrine of Divine Attributes " is a careful and stimulating discussion of the theories of divine attributes in Maimonides and Thomas; it is, in my view, the best article in this collecton. Feldman gives an insightful treatment of the connection between God's simplicity and the medieval reluctance to predicate God's attributes in a positive sense; and he argues convincingly that Maimonides's theory of divine attributes was misunderstood by scholastic philosophers, including Thomas. In the process of making his case for this thesis, he gives a subtle and sensitive presentation of both Maimonides's and Thomas's theories. In comparison with these two articles, the inclusion of Ferdinand Brüngel's " Maimonides ' Agnosticism and Scholasticism " seems to me to raise serious questions about Dienstag's editorial principles. Consider the following quotation from Brüngel's article:

The same is true, if we ask Thomas, why he believes that man can reach the esence [sic] of God in spite of the remaining negativity in all human affirmations. I think

that he is unconsciously led by the idea of incarnation. The Council of Chalcedon states that the human and divine element stay together 'inseparabiliter' and 'inconfuse.' If our understanding of God is mere negativity, God would be separated from mankind forever; if our understanding is mere positivity in attributive affirmation, God and mankind get confused [p. 168].

The level of scholarship shown by the confused account of Thomas's view and the incredible misapplication of the Chalcedonian definition of the two natures of Christ is typical of this article.

Harry Blumberg's article " The Problem of Immortality in Avicenna, Maimonides and St. Thomas Aquinas " is a broad, general presentation of the view of immortality taken by each of these three philosophers. He does some source analysis on their views and concludes with a brief comparison of the three.

The large group of articles treating the influence of Jewish philosophy on Latin scholasticism is very uneven. It includes some rather old articles, which were certainly influential in their time but are now outdated. M. Joel's " Etwas über den Einfluss der jüdischen Philosophie auf die christliche Scholastik," Jacob Guttmann's " Thomas von Aquin," Clemens Baeumker's " Bericht über die Philosophie der europäischen Völker im Mittelalter " are all very early attempts to determine the fact and the extent of Jewish influence on the scholastics and, in particular, of Maimonides's influence on Thomas. Louis Israel Newman's " Jewish Elements in Christian Philosophy " and Charles and Dorothea Singer's " Jewish Elements in Thirteenth-Century Scholasticism " are also general surveys of scholasticism's debt to Jewish philosophy, including special conideration of Thomas's dependence on Maimonides; and though they are less evidently dated than the three articles mentioned just above, they contain numerous views now no longer generally accepted. To take just one example from each, few contemporary scholars would now lump together Anselm, Bernard, John of Salisbury, and Abelard under the general heading of " Platonists," as Newman did (p. 125); and Albert the Great's birth is currently placed around 1200 rather than 1193, as the Singers gave it (p. 171). Isaac Husik's "An Anonymous Medieval Christian Critic of Maimonides " is a brief survey of the early controversies about Maimonides's influence on Thomas. It summarizes the views of Joel, Guttmann, and Baeumker presented in those articles of theirs which are reprinted in this volume; and it gives a short sketch of scholastic philosophy, much of which has again been rendered outdated by subsequent discoveries in the field. L. M. de Rijk's Logica Modernorum (Assen, 1962-1967), for example, is alone sufficient to disprove the notion that until the latter half of the twelfth century Latin philosophy was " limited to a discussion of the nature of God, the persons in the Trinity, the thoughts of God ... and the human soul " (p. 52). Kolomon Harasta's more nearly contemporary " Die Bedeutung Maimuns für Thomas von

Aquin " is a very broad but scholarly comparison of Maimonides and Thomas in all those parts of their philosophy where Thomas seems most clearly dependent on Maimonides. Zevi Diesendruck's article, " Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas " takes the same approach as Harasta's but with less scholarly insight than Harasta shows, especially in dealing with Thomas. For example, Diesendruck attributes to Thomas the view that God's Providence extends in general to " the abiding spheres, and the species of the lower world. But due to his wisdom, man is an exception because he can raise himself to the importance of a species " (p. 189). This rather confused account comes closer to describing Maimonides's view than to explaining Thomas's since it is Maimonides, not Thomas, who holds that God's Providence is not extended to the individuals of any sublunary species except men, who partake of the care of Providence to the extent to which they have intellectual excellence. P. Synave's " La révélation des vérités divines naturelles d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin " is a thorough scholarly documentation of Thomas's dependence on Maimonides for his account of the purpose of divine revelation, though it too is an old article and its method of dating, which depends in large part on the assumption that apart from holidays Thomas invariably held two disputations a week, is not generally accepted now. Jacob Dienstag's " St. Thomas Aquinas in Maimonidean Scholarship " falls in the middle of this group of articles as the anthology is arranged, but it serves as a fitting summary of them. It consists in a survey of the literature tracing Maimonides's influence on Thomas and includes a description of well over half the articles in this volume.

The two articles on political philosophy and social doctrine—Marvin Fox's "Maimonides and Aquinas on Natural Law " and Hans Liebeschütz's " Judaism and Jewry in the Social Doctrine of Thomas Aquinas "—are both interesting and informative papers. Fox discusses the different positions on natural law of the two philosophers and relates the differences in their theories to differences in attitude towards Old Testament law. Liebeschütz describes Thomas's attitude towards Jews and Judaism and the function which Jews exercised in the society of Thomas's day.

Majid Fakhry's article " The 'Antinomy' of the Eternity of the World in Averroes, Maimonides and Aquinas " surveys these thinkers' philosophical treatment of the theological doctrine that the world was created in or with time and concludes with the rather implausible suggestion that Kant's discussion of the antinomies of pure reason may have been influenced by the work of these medieval philosophers. Fakhry's understanding of the texts he discusses is often weaker than one might hope. For example, he faults Maimonides and Thomas because they argue on the basis of *Topics* 104b that Aristotle himself did not consider his arguments for the eternity of the world demonstrative. According to Fakhry, Aristotle in that passage is saying " that the question whether the universe

is eternal or not is one of those questions ' concerning which we are unable to reason ' because they are too high for us " (pp. 111-112). And he complains that Maimonides and Thomas are basing a " curious interpretation " of Aristotle on an isolated text which is, after all, " in a logical work " (p. 112), Fakhry apparently fails to understand the basic distinction between dialectic and demonstration that underlies the interpretation of Aristotle which he criticizes in Maimonides and Thomas; and consequently he misunderstands the passage in *Topics,* where Aristotle in fact says that the question of the world's eternity is an appropriate subject for dialectical [i. e., rather than demonstrative] reasoning because of the vastness of the question and the difficulty of finding a *logos* on either side of the issue (*Top.* 104b 12-16).

Hans Liebeschütz's " Eine Polemik des Thomas von Aquino gegen Maimonides " is a very short discussion of the place allotted man in the universe in the differing theories of Maimonides and Thomas, with an attempt to account for the differences in their views on the basis of their differing attitudes towards the Old Testament and history.

" Saint Thomas d'Aquin " is taken from Pierre Duhem's well-known *Le Système du Monde,* which has in the course of time become outdated in many respects. Duhem's thesis in this piece is that Thomas thinks of existence as an accident of essence and that in this part of his doctrine Thomas is particularly faithful to the tradition of Avicenna (p. 286). Though Thomas's metaphysics is, of course, dependent in many ways on Avicenna's work, one will find a convincing argument against this particular thesis in, for example, F. Copleston, *Aquinas* (Baltimore, 1955, pp. 96-104); and the view Copleston presents is the one generally accepted now. The second article in this group, E. Gilson's " Maimonide et la philosophie de l'*Exode,*" briefly discusses Avicenna, Maimonides, and Thomas on essence and existence. Gilson praises Maimonides for connecting the doctrine of simplicity, particularly the idea that God *is* his existence, to an interpretation of the Tetragrammaton; and he sees this work of Maimonides as formative for Thomas's metaphysics.

The anthology concludes with the editor's bibliography of articles discussing both Maimonides and Thomas and a set of biographical notes on the contributors to the volume. The choice of selections in the bibliography reflects the general tendency of the book. There are eighty-eight entries in the bibliography; almost three-fourths of them date from before 1950, and nine of them are from the nineteenth century.

In general, then, this anthology is of most use for showing the foundations and beginnings of our understanding of medieval Jewish philosophy and its influence of Thomas and Latin scholasticism generally. It is not the book one might have expected or hoped for, especially given the editor's stated purpose—a book which would reflect the current state

of scholarship in medieval philosophy and enable specialists in Latin scholasticism to understand its Jewish antecedents in a new and better way.

ELEONORE STUMP

Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

Phenomenology and Philosophical Understanding. Edited by EDO PIVČEVIĆ. London: The Cambridge University Press, 1975. Pp. 288. $6.95.

This is an extremely rich anthology of essays on specific aspects of the phenomenological venture, each written for the collection by British and American philosophers—if we discount Paul Ricoeur—and ranges from close-in treatments of self-evidence and intentionality to broader considerations of the life-world and the ethics of freedom. As a whole, this volume will do much to involve Anglo-American thought in the stream of thinking that began with Brentano. It will achieve as much as can be expected since, as the editor admits, phenomenologists " are not exactly renowned for their clarity." Heidegger had been invited to contribute but begged off because of his age. The outcome is sixteen essays, each preceded by a short abstract written by the author himself. We notice attention paid Husserl and Austin, Scheler and Sartre, Hegel and Marx.

In an excellent analysis of Husserl's notion of self-evidence, David Levin notes that for Brentano's first " disciple " phenomenological technique is the guardian of philosophical humanism: beyond the level of transcendental critique, there is always the goal of a therapy for the discipline as a whole. At the same time that we discover procedures for extending our acquaintance with the objects of our world, we come to recognize the uniquely human contribution to this world. Through phenomenology, for Levin. " we are offered the chance to recognize what is reflected in and, in effect, released by, the evidence of our intended objects: our most primitive power to mean, our power to bestow meaning " (pp. 77).

It is of course, the mode of this bestowal that arouses such clamor regarding this type of reflection, and David Carr shows to good effect the relationship between the treatment of intentionality in Anglo-American philosophy post-Chisholm and the meaning of this notion in Husserl. Standing between Husserl and the Scholastic origin of the notion is Brentano. In his *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte,* Brentano called attention to the ambiguity that allows Carr leeway to point out parallels and differences between Brentano and Husserl, and between Husserl and Chisholm. The difficult juncture of intentional existence and the

self-evident is also the place where A.J. Ayer chooses to dwell. His essay argues that the supposed self-evident quality of a proposition can have no import; it is merely a request for one's listener to look again at things. Then, if "they are unable to see them as we do, we have no further argument to offer" (p. 92).

As might be expected in a collection of papers with British contributors, there is much discussion of the relationship of Husserl to Austin. In spite of the fact that there is no evidence that Austin ever read Husserl, there seems to be more than coincidence in the former's use of the phrase "linguistic phenomenology." Anthony Manser attempts to isolate the significance of the term for Austin and finds it in his stress on "what we say when" over "what we say." Manser goes on to lament that in the later years of his life Austin deserted this emphasis, and that this betrayal of his early "linguistic phenomenology" is evident in *How to Do Things with Words*. There the notion of words as tools, and the related notion of efficiency, both point to a separation of language from the world that was absent from the "what we say when" period of Austin's philosophy. Manser is disappointed that Austin departed from his phenomenological view of the word-world relationship to embrace one that holds language apart from the world it is about, the realm that it means.

A good half of the volume is devoted to issues beyond the relationship of phenomenology to linguistic philosophy. Richard Zaner offers us one more exposition of the famous *epoche* and the reduction technique. At bottom, both concepts reflect Husserl's determination not to allow any part of the pre-given or accepted awareness to remain. Hence, writes Zaner, to grasp subjectively the mode in which human life is rooted in the world is in fact to make the discovery: one is an agent in the world living within an elemental commitment to that world. Again, to discover oneself as holding this belief is to know oneself as performer of the belief: what is given is so given through acts of consciousness. Therefore both poles— awareness and the object of which it is such—are strict correlates and must be described from within that context. In a very impressive three pages Zaner explores this situation through four different phrasings. Less satisfying is Zaner's concluding argument that phenomenology, far from being the "trancendental idealism" called such by Husserl, might well be a "new empiricism." This nomenclature, allows Zaner, requires us to conceive an empirical methodology on Husserl's terms, i. e., that nothing may be posited beyond all possible experiences. If indeed the "things themselves" in consciousness are experiences, it may be true that Husserl has a new form of empiricism, but it is one that can solely live within an idealist ontology. Only confusion can result from effort to draw it outside that characterization.

The briskly written essay by J. N. Findlay represents perhaps the best brief introduction to Husserl's thought this reviewer has come upon and

the clearest expression of the interpretation most students of Husserl's texts hold at present. Briefly, this is that Husserl's later writings departed from the valuable " suspense " he introduced into discussions of awareness. He bypassed the true achievements in his own thought—awareness as the correlation of objectivity and subjectivity—when he reached the point of espousing the dependence of all objectivity on constitutive subjectivity. Findlay's analysis is both art and scholarship; he credits Sokolowski's *The Foundations of Husserl's Concept of Constitution* and Kern's *Husserl Und Kant* for his inspiration, but the outcome is surely his own.

One area where phenomenology has traditionally received a hearing, in fact the realm to which some would relegate it, is valuation theory or descriptive ethics. The earliest effort to construct an ethics with phenomenological moorings was Max Scheler's. Yet Husserl himself rejected Schelerian eidetic ethics as " fool's gold " and warned against " picturebook phenomenology." In this collection Peter Heath examines Scheler as prototype of a descriptive ethician and roundly seconds Husserl's opinion. Heath is a friend to Scheler's ethics in such degree that it needs no enemies. He enumerates three features without which Scheler's system would be vastly improved, even if still inadequate. These are: 1) the " ontologism " which forms so incongruous a feature of Scheler's system, 2) the collapse of the distinction between the individual making a value judgment and the student of the occasion and content of such judgment, and 3) the Schelerian schema of dependencies between values. Heath insists that his critique is not intended as a demolition of Scheler's entire system, nor as the dismissal of the possibility of phenomenological ethics. While he may not intend the latter goal, surely there is little left of Scheler's ethics at his essay's end.

Two of our most distinguished contemporary philosophers, Ricoeur and Flew, bring the continental and the linguistic perspectives to bear on the problem of human freedom. The not incidental fact that one is a Christian and the other a non-theist only serves to heighten interest in their contributions. Ricoeur claims there is an " implicit " phenomenology of freedom embedded in philosophical descriptions of freedom rendered within particular contexts, and also an " explicit " phenomenology which is the outcome of neutralizing, or, in a word we might expect, " bracketing " these contexts in order to reveal a descriptive core that is the same in all cases. This procedure, of course, is an effort to practice describing without presuppositions, the classic phenomenological goal. Ricoeur isolates five contexts for freedom in the history of thought, those of Aristotle, Augustine, Descartes, Kant and Hegel. Ricoeur has worked close to this area before, in his treatment of the voluntary, but one follows along with a growing sense of excitement. What, indeed, can remain after these reductions as " a purified ' lived experience ' whose structure is accessible to an essential

analysis? " Here Ricoeur begins his " explicit " phenomenology, which surprisingly turns to the ordinary language philosophy of Austin in *A Plea for Excuses*. He tells us he is looking for a linguistic phenomenology, that language analysis and phenomenological analysis overlap at least partially. The operative principle is: ". . . one can reach the meaning of the lived only by way of what one says about it, and . . . one understands what one says only by restoring the meaning of the lived. . . ."

The paradox that is potential in this statement is difficult to overlook. The editor of the collection himself addresses this problem in as direct a fashion as possible, it seems. For Pivčević, the "philosophical understanding" of the volume's title is precisely the issue of analysing concepts, and this requires a method. Clearly phenomenology and language analysis are the leading contenders at present for this assignment and just as clearly—for the editor—neither alone is capable. Each is " directed to different structurally interlinked " levels of the concept issue. A linguistic performance cannot be an exercise of the concept unless, he argues, it is accompanied by an understanding of the meaning of such performance: yet this meaning cannot be a linguistic performance. Thus: " to have concepts is not merely to possess a linguistic ability of a certain kind; it is to be able to understand the possibility of the same *thought* being expressed in different languages in different ways." Pivčević finally decides it is not possible to " have " concepts without having the capacity for the varying moves of consciousness definitively characteristic of conceptualization, and this was one of Husserl's main premises. Because Husserl saw concepts as types of meanings, and these in turn as intelligible only in term of *acts* of meaning, he regarded his main task as a description of such modes of consciousness. Pivčević indicates that it is here Husserl's model of conceptualization runs into trouble. While the latter provides us with some transcendental interpretation of what it is to " have " concepts, his model cannot enlighten us on the key relation—or distinction—between the transcendental and the psychological sense of " having."

After emphasizing that the contribution of the linguistic analyst is to insist that to have concepts is to have certain linguistic abilities, while that of the phenomenologist is to concentrate on the modes of experiencing concepts, Pivčević seems to opt for a solution that neither school of thought would cherish; concepts are not merely subjective interpretative patterns, but are also, some of them, " embedded in the objective structure of the world." When part of the concept is the existence of exemplifying instances, as he claims is the case with concepts such as ego, existence and truth, then instances are necessary presuppositions of the concept. The reader will not deny his observation that " concepts such as these . . . are philosophically most interesting," although probably not on the same grounds.

This collection of essays presents us with an exceptional opportunity

to confront language philosophy with its continential sibling. We continue to look for a common parent, and even more eagerly for a family reunion.

JOHN B. DAVIS, O. P.

The Aquinas Institute
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

Spirit and Light: Essays in Historical Theory. Ed. by WILLIAM B. GREEN and MADELEINE L'ENGLE. New York: Seabury Press, 1976. Pp. 148. $8.95.

Besides a common admiration for Canon Edward West of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine these essays written in his honor are most obviously connected by a deep appreciation of the rich Christian tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Though partisans of theologies of the Latin tradition will find much to question, everyone who is not already well versed in Eastern Christianity will find much to ponder in this little book.

The monotholete controversy is not of burning interest in the hearts and minds of many today, as it seems somewhat technical and remote even for a Christological controversy of the ancient world . William Green's lucid and concise essay " Maximus Confessor: An Introduction " provides even the casual reader with an understanding of the importance of the controversy and a respect for the tradition which produced the orthodox formulation. Professor Green ably shows that Maximus's doctrine of the two natures of Christ harmonizes with the thought of the Alexandrian theologians, and indicates the importance of Maximus in the later theology of the East by sketching the connection between deification and incarnation in the Confessor's work.

Reginald Fuller of the Virginia Theological Seminary begins his essay on " Christmas, Epiphany, and the Johannine Prologue " with the following observations:

Canon Edward West's friends and colleagues will remember his disdain for the festival of Christmas. After a striking series of Advent sermons . . . he would lapse into a sort of intellectual hibernation and spiritual melancholy to emerge again only at Epiphany. Edward West is profoundly influenced by Eastern Orthodoxy, for which Epiphany takes theological and liturgical precedence over Christmas. And it is the celebration of Christ's baptism, not the visit of the Magi, that engages the primary attention of the Orthodox. (p. 63)

Fuller then proceeds by examining what he supposes to have been the original form of the Johannine Prologue to demonstrate that the New

Testament supports the practice of Canon West and of the Orthodox. The reconstructions which scholars have proposed for the Logos Hymn are so various that Fuller concedes in a footnote, " It is easy to stand on the sidelines and laugh at the lack of agreement over the extent of the original hymn," but goes on to say, " Fruitful exegesis demands that we take risks " (p. 72, note 6). It cannot be denied that Fuller's exegesis is fruitful, whatever degree of risk may attach to statements like " This then is how the gospel, in its first draft, would have begun " (p. 67). Although the prologue to the Gospel of John is traditionally read at Christmas, Fuller observes that the passage should more probably be read as a commentary on the baptism of Christ than on His infancy: " It cannot be other than a commentary on what follows, not on what is absent from the book! " (p. 64). Certainly this emphasis sets the Incarnation of the Word more dynamically against the background of Christ's entire life and ministry and throws the feast of Epiphany into sharper relief. Still, many readers who cherish a certain fondness for Christmas will await Professor Fuller's exegesis of the infancy narratives before joining Canon West in hibernation.

Canon Allchin of Canterbury Cathedral argues in the concluding essay " The Reconciliation of Opposites: A Study of St. Francis and Von Hugel " that St. Francis of Assisi can best be understood from the Eastern Orthodox standpoint, and that his spirit was more in harmony with the theology of a Palamas or Cabasilas than with the spirit of the western universities and the Franciscan Order. Canon Allchin's preference for Eastern over Western painting leads him to make statements which some will attribute to taste alone. " The growing humanism of the West more and more deprived *religious* painting of its theological and spiritual content," he writes (p. 140, emphasis added). "At a certain purely aesthetic level the works of the painters of the Umbrian School are triumphs of human creativity. But they have ceased to be windows opening onto the world of heavenly realities " (p. 141).

Those who object to the Canon's aesthetic judgments may find themselves reacting similarly to his theological contentions. Writing of the difficulty he believes the Franciscan Order had in comprehending the spirit of the saint he says:

The growing legalism of the Latin tradition, the rationalism of much scholastic theology, the tendency to set one thing over against another, all made it increasingly difficult to live by the inclusiveness of the original vision. The theology of a Maximus the Confessor . . . would provide a way of holding together the different facets of the saint's character . . . But such a theology was scarcely to be found. (p. 142)

Allchin argues that it was the movement of theology from the monastic cloisters to the university classrooms which shattered the " coherent re-

lationships between theology, liturgy, and spirituality, which had characterized the earlier centuries " (p. 143). This unfortunate development prepared the way for the " divisions and dichotomies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries " (*loc. cit.*).

The Canon's objections to the theological spirit of the Mediaeval West are shared by other essayists in this collection. Alan Jones, Associate Professor of Ascetical Theology at General Theological Seminary, asserts that " Rome was too mechanistic, too regimented for (the poet John) Donne " (p. 109). He quotes approvingly from Dominic Baker-Smith's analysis of Donne's objections to Roman theology:

It was the question of *quomodo* which elicited the fatal answer of transubstantiation, and to Donne the Roman Church, as he understood it, came to be the Church of *quomodo*, translating the Gospel into definitions and formulae that seemed indifferent to human response. In the same spirit he objects to an insensitive theology with sacraments *ex opere operato* as automatic and self-contained means of grace. (Baker-Smith, *Essays in Celebration*, " John Donne's Critique of True Religion," p. 109)

There is of course an undeniable element of truth in these observations, but in a periodical which openly proclaims itself to be an inheritor of the tradition of the Mediaeval West I may be allowed a few remarks in defense of the scholastics. Canon Allchin is correct to include a discussion of styles of painting in his learned and intelligent essay. Schooled by Aristotle and St. Thomas and Dante the western artists created new humanistic styles of art which lead men to the divine through the natural qualities of artistic representations. Western insensibility to Eastern thought and iconography is to be regretted; but surely corresponding *lacunae* can be discovered in the East's appreciation of the distinctive triumphs of Western Christianity. In these days of ecumenical good fellowship perhaps it would not be appropriate to continue longer with this line of thought. This reviewer incidentally finds himself also tempted gently to remind Professor Jones that the Irish never found much of the " compassion and the liberality " which he so happily attributes to the " *via regia* " of the Anglican religion (p. 105).

Madeleine L'Engle's many readers will rejoice to hear that this collection also includes an essay of hers in which she discusses the creative process by which she came to write such delightful books as *A Wrinkle In Time* and *A Wind in the Door*. John Macquarrie's contribution, " Rest and Restlessness in Christian Spirituality," is most helpful. Like most collections of this kind, *Spirit and Light* is an uneven book, but those who read it will find it contains much to nourish meditation.

WALTER MEAD

The Groton School
    Groton, Connecticut

The American Catholic: A Social Portrait. By ANDREW M. GREELEY. New York: Basic Books, 1977. Pp. 280. $15.00.

This volume is the summation of Andrew Greeley's fifteen years of research on the American Catholic population, its subgroups, and the issues which concern it. Three principal themes recur.

First, Greeley asserts that there is a " cultural division of labor in American society." That is, Catholics are dramatically under-represented in key social positions (e. g. the national media, foundations, the great private universities) despite their demonstrable educational, economic, and political attainments. Greeley's conclusion is that there remains a not-insignificant residual nativism in these important sectors of the society.

Secondly, Greeley claims that the myth of the " melting pot " is inadequate for understanding American society, and especially American Catholics, today. The tenacity of ethnic, religious, and familial traditions suggests that the " stewpot " is more accurate as an analogue. And there is a significant paradox here: that while American Catholics have equalled or surpassed the host-cultural majority in attainment, they retain markedly different characteristics in terms of orientation to the family, the neighborhood, and religious symbols.

Thirdly, Greeley makes a sharp distinction between Catholic Americans as a subpopulation and the institutional Church. Here the significant phenomenon is of Americans claiming Catholicity as a core personal identity, while simply ignoring as irrelevant the institutional dimensions of the Church, especially in its teaching role.

Since I am not competent to address the questions of sociological method which will surround this book, I would prefer to raise what seem to me to be the serious theological questions which emerge from each of Greeley's three themes. In terms of the " cultural division of labor," it seems to me that we have to ask whether the American civil religion (or at least the dominant symbols and myths of American culture) has a demonic tendency to distort and stereotype the Catholic population of this country. I have argued in another journal that this ought not be the case in the instance of the interface between civil religion and American Catholics, since the social-ethical theory of Catholic theology and the American civil religious tradition share a common anthropology and a common incarnational/sacramental vision of reality. At the very least, Greeley's data suggest that a continued dialogue between Catholic theologians and researchers into the dominant American cultural symbols and myths is vital for both groups today.

Greeley's data on the tenacity of familial, neighborhood, and religious traditions among American Catholics challenge theologians to ask what an adequate American Catholic theology of " tradition and traditions "

would look like. Are there themes in the genuine Catholic social-ethical tradition (realism, voluntarism, the principles of subsidiarity and the common good, for example) which could provide resources for dealing with the distorting tendencies of both the capitalist and socialist ideologies in American society today? Would, for example, the ascetical tradition in Catholic spirituality, especially as this emerges in family and neighborhood, have anything significant to say to the contemporary " crisis of limits " ? Or, in another vein, do theological systems rooted in the popular themes of alienation and radical secularization really reflect the lived experience of the American Catholic population? These data ought certainly to raise intriguing possibilities for the dialogue with theologies of liberation in the American Catholic community.

Finally, Greeley's claims about the rise of " communal Catholics " (i. e. those who, while claiming a Catholic identity, accepting the basic faith-vision and symbols of the Catholic Christian tradition, and participating at key life moments in the sacramental system of the Church, simply find the Church-as-institution irrelevant to their lives) raise the most serious questions for American Catholic ecclesiology. Two inter-related issues suggest themselves here: the theology of the " reception " of Church teaching, and Newman's theology of the *sensus fidelium*. Has American Catholicism suffered from an overly juridical understanding of the magisterium? What is the relationship between the " Church teaching " and the " Church taught," empirically and theologically? What is the nature, empirically and theologically, of decision-making in the Church? Fundamentally, what is the theology of revelation and faith which undergirds the many operant ecclesiologies in the American Catholic population today, and how can these inform and correct each other? If Greeley's research is even partially accurate, these may well be the key theological issues for American Catholicism today. And further, such research suggests that theologians addressing these and similar questions must be in serious dialogue with empirical researchers, as well as with the more traditional cognate disciplines.

In the midst of the many calls today for an "American theology," Greeley's research reminds us that such an enterprise must be thoroughly interdisciplinary. And if theology is really *fides quaerens intellectum*, an understanding at the service of the Church community and its mission, then data such as these will play no small part in that effort. At the very least, Greeley's book is a sober warning that a theology out of touch with the living faith experience of its people, as that faith discloses meaning and value in the fluid texture of their lives, is of little utility in the American Church of the late twentieth century.

<div align="right">GEORGE S. WEIGEL, JR.</div>

Religious Studies Center
    Archdiocese of Seattle

The Education of an Urban Catholic Minority: Catholics in Chicago 1833-1965. By JAMES W. SANDERS. Oxford University Press: New York, 1977. Pp. xviii + 278. $13.95.

When Chicago's first Catholic bishop arrived in 1843 he found a diocese without a single school. By the end of the nineteenth century the Archdiocese boasted the largest Catholic school system in the United States. The present study examines the role of the particular social context of Chicago in shaping this rapid growth of Catholic education through its " golden age " in the twentieth century up to the onset of its recent difficulties. Mr. Sanders finds that religious motivation, ethnicity, and poverty were the principal factors shaping Chicago's Catholic schools until the 1920's when Catholic entrance into the mainstream of Chicago life was clear in such signs as political power, increasing movement into the middle class, and decreasing ethnic tensions. Cardinal Mundelein, who presided over the schools during this pivotal period, is praised for his " political savvy " and his achievements in organizing Chicago's Catholic schools. The twenties' promise of continuing advancement was frustrated by the Depression and the Second World War, which hindered Catholic efforts to provide sufficient places for all who wished to attend their schools. The increasing presence of Black Catholics in the 1940's produced what the author calls a " race crisis " which has been exacerbated by the failure of the techniques developed by Chicago's Catholic schools in dealing with the problems of poverty and ethnicity to provide a viable Catholic education for Black Catholics.

Mr. Sanders's study is based on a thorough immersion in the Archdiocesan Archives and his generalizations are supported with statistics drawn from a variety of public sources. The subjects taught in Chicago's Catholic schools are considered only in so far as they relate to ethnicity as is the case with instruction in languages other than English, which is discussed at several points. Although the important role of the teaching orders and congregations in the Archdiocesan school system is considered, it is not clear that the author has examined their respective archives. In the case of the Dominicans, for example, such a search would throw some light on how the Archdiocese's efforts to balance pastoral and educational needs could be experienced as a hindrance to their educational goals.

The Education of an Urban Minority succeeds in relating the development of Chicago's Catholic schools to the particular social context of Chicago. Mr. Sanders has written a book which is informative, well researched, and a joy to read.

JON ALEXANDER, O. P.

Aquinas Institute
  Dubuque, Iowa

Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life. By BRUCE C. BIRCH and LARRY L.
RASMUSSEN. Minneapolis, Minnesota; Augsburg Publishing House,
1976. Pp. 221. $8.95.

Two scholars, both professors at Wesley Seminary in Washington, D. C.—
Birch in Old Testament, Rasmussen in Christian Ethics—have put together
a study of the way the bible can and ought to help our moral decision
making. They note the present gap between the work of biblical scholars
and Christian ethicists. The first tend to produce highly technical and
often conflicting analyses of biblical materials. The ethicists, not being
trained biblical scholars, tend to be gun-shy of all that erudition and avoid
grounding their thought in the bible and turn rather to the life sciences,
psychiatry, the social sciences and the common fund of human, practical
wisdom. Birch and Rasmussen want to bring the bible back to central
prominence in helping Christian ethicists do their work.

To accomplish this they survey recent efforts to relate the bible to
ethics, restate the task of Christian ethics, point up the church as a com-
munity of moral deliberation, discuss the authority of the bible vis-a-vis
non-biblical sources, show ways of making the bible more available to the
work of ethics, and conclude with some reflections on the implication of all
this for the church.

The survey, though somewhat plodding, is surely a help in collecting
into one place the various nuances of thought by prominent men in this
matter. In restating the task of Christian ethics the authors emphasize the
importance of character formation and the personal acceptance of value
before one moves to decision making and doing. Here they state the central
point of their book: " Our contention is that the traditionally neglected
topic in American Christian ethics (i. e., character formation) is also the
most important one. It should have higher priority and be considered of
greater importance than has been the case. Our contention is also that
biblical materials can and ought to exercize their greatest impact upon
Christian ethics at this point; that is, upon the character or identity of the
decision maker " (p. 84). A truly illuminating passage (pp. 105-107)
describes a person who has found in Jesus the object of final loyalty,
devotion and commitment, and who seeks to take from him the clues of
how to be and how to do.

This is not done effectively, it is argued, except in the church as a
gathered community of worship, fraternity, and education. The use of the
bible in the development of moral character is not a matter of quick study
but of long-term nurture, which can be given only in a community of be-
lievers. Thus we see the importance of liturgy and sacrament, doctrine and
teaching, preaching and pastoral counseling; in other words, the importance
of the church as a shaper of moral identity, bearer of moral tradition, and

community of moral deliberation. Regarding the authority of the bible vis-a-vis non-biblical sources, the authors hold that the church cannot do ethics today on the basis of the bible alone. It never did. Augustine used neoplatonic thought; Aquinas used Aristotle and natural law. The task of the church is rather to bring its unique scriptural resources into dialogue with the many non-biblical sources of ethical insight. Still, the bible remains primary in its authority since it is the key to distinguishing Christian ethics from ethics done in other ways. We are urged to keep in mind, however, the immense variety of biblical literature and be discerning how each sort of literature such as narrative stories, historical events, wisdom sayings, parables, liturgical and eschatological materials, and so on, should be used in illuminating ethical matters. The importance of good exegesis is stressed and its method explained in detail. The authors also insist that the whole canon, that is, the totality of scripture both in the Old and New Testament, be kept intact. We are not free to disregard those scriptures we don't like.

The book concludes with strong words about the role of the church. Its gathered communities (the body of worshippers) should not turn in on themselves but consciously relate their liturgical and biblical experience to ethical issues. Its scattered communities (the people who work directly with social problems and tend to disregard worship and liturgy as somehow useless) ought to see the crucial importance of cult and long-term nurture. Only in this way will their church-going brethren be able to respond to the issues in an intelligent and deeply Christian way.

All in all this is a fine book. It succeeds in exposing an area of need in Christian ethics—the need of the bible! And it steers a sensible course between biblical fundamentalism and sheer humanism in showing how the scriptures can be called upon to enlighten modern ethical problems. The emphasis on the "ethics of being" in contrast to the "ethics of doing" and the role of the bible in character formation, puts one in mind of the moral theology of Thomas Aquinas which begins with the principle that the degree of goodness anything has depends on its degree of being (cf. *Summa Theol.* 1a2ae., q. 18, a. 1) and goes on to his lengthy study of the virtues. One feels that if the Birch-Rasmussen thesis catches on there will be a re-examination of Aquinas's contribution to moral theology.

The emphasis on the role of the church is perceptive. It helps to jog the complacent church-goers into an awareness of the need for a Christian response to profound and far-reaching ethical problems. But it also reminds the Christian social activist that there can be no effective Christian education in social problems without the church.

Some points need further discussion. The notion of church as gathered community of believers I find helpful but inadequate. I want to ask: Which gathered community? There are many instances where one gathered Christian community does not agree with the ethical conclusions, even

the behavior, of another gathered Christian community. One thinks of abortion, but also of pacifism, capitalism, Christian Marxism, women's liberation, and a host of other issues. How one lands on each of these issues depends in part at least on which gathered Christian community is deliberating over it.

I disagree that stressing the doctrine of biblical inspiration would lead to disregarding the flexibility of various biblical materials as the source for ethical conclusions. It might lead to that (and perhaps the authors have some very fundamentalist sects in mind) but it need not, since modern theories of inspiration surely keep in mind the different genres in biblical literature. I would also like to have seen a more explicit treatment of the ten commandments as moral imperatives. Are they still binding? Even on the basis of the criteria offered in this book they would seem to be: they appear in both the Testaments, and more frequently in the New than the Old, and are part of the explicit moral teaching of Jesus.

The book concludes with the hope that it will assist in linking the Christian's moral struggle with the church's rich fund of biblical resources. It has succeeded in doing this.

THOMAS HEATH, O. P.

Priory of Saint Stephen
  Dover, Massachusetts

BOOKS RECEIVED

Abingdon: *Two Sacred Words: Experience and Structure in the World's Religions* by L. D. Shimm. Pp. 205; $6.95, paper.

American Academy of Religion: *The Religious Language of Nicholas of Cusa* by James E. Biechler. Pp. viii, 240; no price given.

Beauchesne: *Le déplacement de la théologie* by Bellet Audinet et alii. Pp. 184.

Città Nuova Editrice: *La resurrezione nell'insegnamento nella profezia nelle apparizioni di Gesu*, Vol. 1. Pp. 231.

Delachaux et Niestle: *Jesus Christ et la foi: recherches neotestamentaires* by Philippe H. Menoud. Pp. 359.

Consortium: *Down to Earth: The New Protestant Vision of the Virgin Mary* by John de Satge. Pp. 162; $12.00.

Fairleigh Dickinson University Press: *Morality and the Human Future in the Thought of Teilhard de Chardin: A Critical Study* by Joseph A. Grau. Pp. 389; $19.50.

Knox: *Christ in Christian Tradition*, Vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon* by Aloys Grillmeier. Pp. 599; $22.00.

Ktav: *Disputation and Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter,* edited by Frank E. Talmage. Pp. xix, 411.

Oxford University Press: *Contemporary Transformations of Religion* by Brian Wilson. Pp. ix, 119; $11.85.

Pickwick: *Bridge Between the Testaments: A Reappraisal of Judaism from the Exile to the Birth of Christianity* by E. D. Gowan. Pp. 514; $5.95 paper.

South Asian Books: *The Hindu Personality in Education: Tagore, Gandhi and Aurobindo* by William C. Cenkner, O. P. Pp. 230; $12.75.

Van Gorcum: *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis* by J. P. Fokkelman. Pp. 244.

Westminster: *Faith Enacted as History: Essays in Biblical Theology* by Will Herberg. Pp. 281; $12.00.

Wilfred Laurier University Press: *Mystics and Scholars: The Calgary Conference on Mysticism* edited by Harold Coward and Terence Penelhum. Pp. 118; $4.00, paper.

Zondervan: *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. 2, edited by Colin Brown. Pp. 1023; $24.95.

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