VERIFICATION IN THEOLOGY: A TENSION IN REVISIONIST METHOD

A CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE of revisionist theology [1] is a stress on public criteria of theological discourse. Whatever differences may exist among revisionist theologians in the specific understanding of theological method, there is a shared emphasis on the necessary recasting of theology in an apologetical mode. The theologian cannot rely on arguments which presuppose an audience of Christian believers. The pressures of a secular culture no longer shaped by a Christian or, for that matter, a religious cast of mind, doubts within the Christian community itself, and the universal claim to truth of the Christian message compel the theologian to look beyond the circle of faith. As Langdon Gilkey has put it:

> For its symbols so to have meaning, theological reflection must somehow extend beyond the narrow religious range of the experience of faith and of the positive doctrinal statements relative to hearing the Word in church. It must be able to deal systematically and effectively with the character of ordinary life and develop a set of symbols which refer *both* to these felt meanings in secular experience *and* to the positive content of tradition and revelation.[2]

A philosophical argument, in one form or other, to produce such a correlation of Christian tradition and common human experi-

[1] The term revisionist is used by David Tracy to describe a group of contemporary theologians "committed to what seems clearly to be the central task of contemporary Christian theology: the dramatic confrontation, the mutual illuminations and corrections, the possible basic reconciliation between the principal values, cognitive claims, and existential faiths of both a reinterpreted post-modern consciousness and a reinterpreted Christianity." He includes in this group along with himself figures like Leslie Dewart, Gregory Baum, Michael Novak, Langdon Gilkey, Van Harvey, and Gordon Kaufman. *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 32.

[2] Langdon Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), p. 201.

ence is a defining characteristic of revisionist method. The revisionist theologian tries to demonstrate that there is even in secular culture an experience of ultimacy or unconditionedness which can only be adequately thematized with some form of religious symbol. Raising this experience of ultimacy to reflective or explicit awareness shows that, contrary to secularistic assumptions, religious discourse in general and Christian discourse in particular are experientially meaningful.

While there is general agreement on the need for and possibility of rational theological argumentation to show that religious symbols are *meaningful*, there is disagreement in revisionist method on the possibility of a public demonstration of the *validity* or *truth* of such symbols. The central issue is the extent to which a theological argument can motivate an individual to accept the truth of a religious claim. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the dispute over theological verification between Langdon Gilkey and David Tracy. Both authors affirm the need for rational argumentation to discover a "common ground with secular experience either in the form of a natural theology or of a prolegomenon of some sort."[3] Both authors rely on a philosophical analysis in the form of a phenomenology of human experience to show that the ultimate horizon of human experience is religious and appropriately thematized with some form of religious symbolization. Both go on to argue for the adequacy of certain Christian symbols to common human experience. But while they agree on the possibility of a demonstration of the meaningfulness of religious symbols, they disagree on the verifying force of such argumentation. It is this disagreement which I intend to examine.

Theological Verification: The Position of David Tracy

I. Metaphysical Verification

In what Tracy admits will probably be the most controversial aspect of the program of foundational theology presented in

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

Blessed Rage for Order, he links the task of theological verification to metaphysical reasoning. Like Gilkey, Tracy affirms the distinction of the questions of validity and meaning. To show the existential meaningfulness of religious language by correlating it with secular experience is not as yet to settle the question of its validity. To point out the importance of the God-question in human experience is not to answer the question affirmatively. Is God real or simply a projection of human desires and wishes? The defense of the cognitive value of the affirmation of God requires an appeal to more than the experiential importance of religious language.

The transition from the meaningfulness to the validity of religious discourse is made possible, in Tracy's opinion, by an explicit metaphysical or transcendental form of theological argument, one which can demonstrate that God is the " necessary " referent of the basic religious dynamic in human experience. Such an argument employs conceptual, as distinguished from metaphorical or symbolic forms of expression, and it depends on explicit criteria reflecting common or universal human experience, and not merely the particular or special experience of a community.

That metaphysics which Tracy finds most suitable is in the "transcendental " pattern of an investigation of the *a priori* conditions of all experience. Such analysis " shows that certain basic beliefs must necessarily be maintained as basic conditions of the possibility of our understanding or existing at all. Such basic beliefs . . . can be shown to be basic by demonstrating the self-contradictory character which their denial involves for any intelligent and rational (' reflective ') inquirer." [4] Relying heavily on Charles Hartshorne's and Schubert Ogden's work, Tracy maintains that the fundamental reality in human experience is a confidence in the worthwhileness of our existence, a " basic " or " existential " faith. Such a confidence in the ultimate meaning of life underlies all that we think and do. To deny such a confidence, to maintain an ultimate absurdity or

[4] Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, p. 159.

lack of coherence, is to contradict the basic fabric of our experience. All acting and knowing *presuppose* such existential faith, at least on the pre-reflective or implicit level. Metaphysics raises to reflective awareness and systematically articulates this basic faith. Having raised existential faith to reflective awareness a metaphysical argument goes on to show that the logical referent of this confidence is that reality referred to by the word " God." The theistic claim, Tracy maintains, is capable of strict metaphysical demonstration. God is the necessary object of those basic beliefs which underpin all that human beings know or do. When the reality and undeniability of existential faith is clearly understood, we are forced to affirm God's existence. The thrust of such argument relies heavily on what Tracy calls a " consciousness-raising exercise." [5] Verification is based not on some object " out there " which can be observed through the senses, but rather on an appeal to the full reality of the experience of the self, including feeling and mood. As one is attuned to the full structure of his or her own lived experience and the dynamic of existential faith, the force of the metaphysical argument is perceived.

II. Existential Verification

While the validity of the theistic claim can be metaphysically demonstrated, religious claims referring to historical realities, for example to the significance of Christ, rely on less rigid forms of argumentation. " On logical grounds alone, a matter-of-fact claim cannot be validated metaphysically in the manner of the theistic claim itself. Yet a factual claim can be validated as intrinsic to the life we all actually—as a matter of fact—lead." [6] Criteria not of metaphysical necessity but of " relative adequacy to experience " become the basis for such argumentation. In an essay on modes of argumentation in systematic theology, Tracy describes theological appeals to criteria of relative adequacy or plausibility as " philosophical but not strictly meta-

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

physical arguments for the relative adequacy of a particular symbol system's illuminative power for some major dimension of our concrete factual experience." [7] The systematic theologian begins with the " classics " of a tradition, with certain central texts or symbols accepted in a particular community, but the heart of theological argument for the truth of such symbols is the success of an effort to show that such classics have more than confessional value. They are true to the extent that they disclose universal features of human experience.

This is not to say that metaphysical analysis is useless in the validation of symbol systems such as those of Christology. One aspect of the theological task is to " determine the cognitive claims in the religious language and judge them in accordance with the general criteria of metaphysics." [8] There are points at which the cognitive claims of Christology, for example, overlap with those of theism and the ontological analysis of the structure of human existence. The symbol of Christ can be interpreted as an articulation of basic faith and that limit experience which underlies the concept of theism. The theologian should try in such cases to correlate the cognitive claims implied in symbols with more strictly metaphysical arguments.[9] The " non-cognitive " meanings of first-order symbolic or metaphorical religious language can be appropriately reexpressed in conceptual categories. First-order statements such as " God is love " are thus interpreted to determine those metaphysical categories which " can articulate the cognitive meaning of that metaphor in a manner which affirms rather than effectively negates the originating metaphor itself." [10] Tracy does not see such a theoretical reworking of the original symbol as a threat to mystery but only to incoherence.

Conceptual analysis has, however, very real limits. Religion is not converted in Tracy's system into a purely theoretical affair. Symbols, myths, stories have a disclosive power which

[7] Tracy, " Modes of Theological Argument," *Theology Today* 33 (1977): 388.
[8] Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, p. 211.
[9] Tracy, " Modes of Theological Argument," p. 387.
[10] Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, p. 161.

theoretical argument does not.[11] Human beings have a need for fiction and concrete imagery that concepts cannot satisfy. There is a " human need for more than conceptual analysis for understanding human existence. More positively, human beings need story, symbol, image, myth, and fiction to disclose to their imaginations some genuinely new possibilities for existence; possibilities which conceptual analysis, committed as it is to understanding present actualities, cannot adequately provide." [12] Human beings are motivated, characters are shaped, and history is changed more by symbol than rational argument. Thus there is a practical dimension of the truth question which draws the theologian beyond the domain of metaphysical or theoretical analysis. A set of criteria of " existential verification " become centrally important in the assessment of the truth of religious symbols.

In sum, we should try to judge the relative adequacy of the various candidate systems of religious symbols in accordance with a contemporary understanding of the criteria of adequacy for " character " formation (principally ethical, aesthetic, and psychological criteria) and for *praxis* (principally ethical, political, and critical sociological criteria).[13]

This attention to the existential meaningfulness of religious language as an aspect of the problem of theological verification is thus added by Tracy to the task of metaphysical analysis. A practical form of verification supplements the theoretical verification of metaphysical reasoning.

III. Theology as Public Discourse

The key to Tracy's understanding of metaphysical criteria and those of existential verification is the appeal to *public* criteria and modes of discourse. The concern to make theology a public form of discourse is reflected, first of all, in Tracy's attitude toward the theologian. Tracy stresses that the theo-

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 207 ff.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 207.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 211.

logian need not be a believer. The force of theological argument does not depend on the presence of explicit Christian faith in the person to whom the argument is directed or in the subject constructing the argument.[14] In his desire to free theology from a narrowly confessional setting and move it into the wider world of public, intersubjective discourse, Tracy is concerned to defend the independence of theological criteria of meaning and truth from faith presuppositions. If theology is to be considered a science and meet the demands imposed upon it by a secular culture, then the pre-understanding guiding theological work must be located in common human experience, not in a special experience accessible only to a member of the Christian community.

This autonomy from faith presuppositions applies even more to the form of argumentation employed in theology. The argumentative force of theological discourse cannot rely on the insights of a particular community or of the believing individual. Even the method of systematic theology, although it begins with the confessional presupposition that certain texts have "classical" importance, "works mainly because its fidelity to public modes of interpretation, and its very choice of that authentically public subject-matter we call the classic, frees the disclosive power of the text from narrowly confessional limitations into the wider world of public concerns."[15] Neither the fundamental nor the systematic theologian can direct his argument solely at the person who already believes. Theological argument must carry persuasive force even for the unbeliever, not simply in the persuasion that religious claims are meaningful, but also that they are true. Tracy's attitude toward theological verification might be summarized in the following way. He presumes that it is in principle possible for the unbeliever to be moved by a rational argument to the

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 36 ftn. 14. See also the debate between John Connelly, Tracy, and Schubert Ogden in *Proceedings for the Catholic Theological Society of America*, 1974.

[15] Tracy, "Modes of Theological Argument," p. 391. See also *Blessed Rage for Order*, p. 250, ftn. 1.

affirmation that God exists. Metaphysical reasoning can convince one of the truth of the theistic claim. "Factual" religious claims, although they cannot be validated metaphysically, are validated by an appeal to common human experience. What the theologian tries to show, for example, with reference to Christological claims, is the adequacy of such beliefs as an articulation of basic existential faith.

> Yet once anyone judges that this possibility (faith in Christ) is one which appropriately and truly re-presents the fundamental actualities of his or her life—that common faith in the worthwhileness of existence, that fundamental trust whose reflective clarification is a metaphysical affirmation of God's loving reality—one may find here not merely a project for the imagination, but a project which re-presents in and with truth *the* truth of our lives.[16]

The role of formal argument in existential verification is limited. Symbol systems convince and convert individuals to new ways of seeing more on a prereflective than on a reflective plane. Tracy, in fact, notes the limits of his own theoretical statement of the meaning of Christ. His work does not develop "appropriately disclosive modern religious symbols." This would be "a task not for the theological interpreter but for the creative artist."[17] But there is clearly an important role for theological argument in unveiling on a reflective level the universal implications of a particular set of symbols and noting connections to metaphysical truths. In the case of both theistic and Christological claims, the fundamental reality which supplies the needed theological criteria is the universal presence of basic or existential faith.

Theological Verification: The Position of Langdon Gilkey

I. Gilkey's Critique of Metaphysics

While David Tracy stresses the role of metaphysical reasoning in theology, Gilkey expresses a variety of doubts about

[16] Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, p. 221.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 250, ftn. 1.

such a theological program. His initial objections to metaphysical argument in theology are forcefully presented in *Naming the Whirlwind.* He questions there the *rationalist presuppositions* which underlie all forms of natural theology, including the process tradition represented by Tracy. A distinguishing feature of all natural theology is some form of a "proof" for God's existence: "By such a proof of God, we mean the establishment, through some sort of philosophical inquiry based upon ordinary secular experience, of the reality of that to which the symbol of God can legitimately refer, and the consequent elucidation of intelligible forms of language about him." [18] The affirmation of God's existence rests in such a system not upon the distinctive character of religious experience or the acceptance of a revelation in faith, but upon rational argumentation:

> The reason this further factor (God) is regarded as real is not because it is directly confronted in experience—which would make this experiential or confessional but not a natural theology—but because it is the sole intelligible cause or ground of this universally present aspect of things. And the intelligibility of our language about this God is derived not from the characteristics of a direct, religious experience of him, but from the intelligibility of the system of metaphysical discourse through which it is exhibited that he is required for the coherence of the whole. Thus the movement from the reality and intelligibility of God is solely dependent upon the strength of the process of rational implication within the system of metaphysical coherence previously established.[19]

Such argument presupposes, Gilkey believes, some principle of sufficient reason. Given certain demands of logical and coherent *thought*, then the *reality* of God may be affirmed. The whole system of argumentation rests on the correspondence of thought and reality, on an ultimate correlation of the structures and requirements of reason and those of being. The logos of reality is presumed to stand in harmony with the logos of the mind.[20] But Gilkey is convinced that the secular spirit of the

[18] Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind,* p. 205.
[19] *Ibid.,* p. 219.
[20] *Ibid.,* pp. 210 ff.

modern period has called in question such rationalist presuppositions as much as it has called in question the existence of God. The radical recognition of historicity and relativity has discredited speculative metaphysics. Consequently, a "prolegomenon" to show the possibility of metaphysics is as much required as a "prolegomenon" to show the possibility of religious discourse.

In *Reaping the Whirlwind* another dimension of this clash of modern experience and metaphysical rationalism is highlighted. In language quite reminiscent of that of Paul Tillich, Gilkey maintains that our concrete experience is of alienation, of a lack of harmony between existence and essence. An abstract appeal to the essential structures of reason and being stands in tension with the lived character of our ordinary experience. An optimistic stress on the universality of basic faith, with its trust in the ultimate meaning of life, minimizes the actual experience of alienation and thrownness and what the religious believer would call the reality of sin. If any integration of life is to take place, it will not arise in the metaphysical identification of essential structures of thought and being. A transcendent and gratuitous resolution of life's ambiguities based on revelation must be affirmed, and this does not arise as the logical consequence of a metaphysical analysis of lived experience.[22] Given the "fallen" character of existence, God is more hidden than obviously present in the reality of basic faith. Although Gilkey disassociates himself from an "exclusivist" model of redemption which would locate it solely in the apprehension of *Christian* revelation, he does stress the need for some revelatory insight in which an experience of alienation is overcome by grace, and God's transcendence is clearly affirmed. "Without the category of the transcendent, of the ground and power of temporal being, of God, history remains an enigma that defies comprehension."[23] In theological

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 222.

[22] Gilkey, *Reaping the Whirlwind: A Christian Interpretation of History* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976), p. 371, ftn. 18.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 129. See also p. 128 and p. 372, ftn. 18.

terms, a philosophical examination of human experience will not by itself confirm the reality of God. Other theological resources, based on particular apprehensions of the sacred in unique religious symbols and thus possessing a certain "confessional" nature, must enter the picture.[24]

II. Revelation and the Truth of Religious Claims

While philosophical analysis is essential in the theological grounding of the *meaningfulness* of religious symbols in ordinary experience, it cannot ground the *validity* or *truth* of such symbols. One of the methodological constants in *Naming the Whirlwind* is the distinction of the questions of meaning and validity: ". . . . philosophical analysis cannot in and of itself validate any propositions within the language game it analyzes." [25] The transition from the prolegomenon, which demonstrates the need for and meaningfulness of religious discourse in general, to theology proper is made possible by the reception in faith of the truth of a *particular* set of religious symbols.[26] But such a reception of particular symbols or a particular hierophany of the sacred is not mediated by a process of rational argumentation. It occurs more on the pre-reflective plane, in the context of a particular community, as the individual experiences certain symbols as answers to the fundamental questions of life. Such symbolic answers are *given*, not created by us. They embody "a definite point of view with regard to man's being in the world, stem from concrete and often particular experiences, expressed symbolically and born communally." [27] The chief emphasis of this position is on the essential passivity of the perception of the truth of religious symbols of a tradition, a passivity best captured in the model of "revelation." The answers to the ultimate questions of life come to individuals in moments of insight, they are not the

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 126. See also p. 371, ftn. 16.
[25] Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind*, pp. 415-416.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 426.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 420.

products of a process of rational argument or demonstration. Although argument may help to clarify and show the significance of Christian or other religious symbols, assent to the truth of such symbols is based on an *actual* experience of the sacred mediated symbolically, and this cannot be secured by argument.[28]

A certain " openness " on the part of man to the transcendent is essential to a reception of revelation. Rational argument may play a role in cultivating such a stance, but here again more is involved than a rational decision:

> . . . neither the meaning nor the truth of religious symbols can be found except by a mind open to the transcendent as a dimension of reality. But openness to the transcendent is more a matter of existence, of fundamental stance, than it is of argument, for such a stance determines the kind of arguments and explanations we find relevant and illuminating. On the most fundamental level, religious understanding depends more on an awareness of and participation in the dimension of the transcendent than it does on argument, though argument may help to lead our existence to that awareness and participation.[29]

The key word in the above quotation is " participation." One must participate in an existential way in a particular religious symbol to appreciate its claim to truth. If no such " ultimate concern " is felt, if on the *existentiell* level the claim to truth is empty, then the truth of the theological argument or of a religious symbol has not been realized. This is why a purely rational understanding of the assent to the truth of religious claims is unsatisfactory. A subjective side must interpenetrate the rational side of such an assent.[30] But this subjective pole is not shaped simply by a process of argument. An " abstract " understanding of the truth of a particular theological demonstration could not mediate the experience of the sacred which must enter the truth of a religious symbol:

[28] Gilkey, *Catholicism Confronts Modernity* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 167.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.,

But as we all have discovered, no argument, however clear, novel and incisive, that demonstrated the adequacy of symbols to facts can establish by itself the *reality* of the divine presence to which these symbols refer. A theological interpretation of history may help with many of the problems of faith and even help to show the adequacy and the truth of faith. However illuminating the intelligibility it achieves, however, as a human work it cannot bring that faith into being.[31]

Theological symbols to be true must " communicate a real encounter with God." [32] Such a fundamental relation of the self to reality is not a product of deliberate and rational choice but of a spontaneous conversion to a new way of seeing the world. Such a conversion has an event character, it is a disclosure which grounds and precedes rather than coming at the end of a rational argument.

Because a faith insight grounds the theological enterprise, Gilkey has a different attitude from Tracy to the role of faith in theology. Tracy, as we have seen, argues that, in principle, it is not necessary for the theologian to be a believer. Gilkey, however, takes a different approach. The movement of specifically theological argument, as distinguished from the prolegomenon, begins with the faith of the theologian. The apprehension of a " hierophany " of the sacred in the religious symbols of a particular community makes possible the recognition of the truth and rational elucidation of a particular religious tradition. The symbol gives rise to thought in the sense that the rational argument of the theologian articulates a prereflective acceptance in faith of a particular religious tradition. Systematic theology assumes the classical form of faith seeking understanding.

III. Gilkey's Response to the Charge of Fideism

One of Gilkey's strongest criticisms of neo-orthodoxy in the early sections of *Naming the Whirlwind* is of its appeal to

[31] Gilkey, *Reaping the Whirlwind,* p. 148.
[32] *Ibid.,* p. 147.
[33] *Ibid.*

" special " theological criteria accessible in principle only to the believer who is already a part of the Christian community. The alternative to this position outlined in the " prolegomenon " is based instead on the redefinition of theology as a form of public discourse. But is not the appeal to the necessity of faith in the recognition of the truth of religious symbol a re-expression of the neo-orthodox point of view? Has not Gilkey slipped back into a refined form of fideism? Gilkey's response to this possible accusation is on two fronts: 1) a defense of the priority of faith in human existence in general; 2) a defense of rational argumentation as a necessary " supplement " to the insight of faith.

In the first of these responses, Gilkey points to the importance of what Michael Polanyi has called the " tacit dimension " in human experience. Every form of discourse, including philosophy and science, is based on certain tacit presuppositions which are assumed as matters of faith rather than proved. Every metaphysical vision, for example originates in a certain way of seeing reality very much conditioned by culture, community, historical tradition and determining influences in the individual life of the philosopher. Scientific investigation is shaped by those paradigms operative in the particular community to which the scientist belongs and by certain convictions, for example about the ultimate coherence of the universe, which cannot be proved.[34] One inevitably holds more to be true than can be demonstrated, and this is as true of science and philosophy as it is of theology. All thought is " theory laden; " it arises in the matrix of a symbolically shaped field of experience which the individual does not deliberately choose and is held on to more on the basis of faith than demonstration. " Thus while argument is always necessary, it is rarely sufficient when we are dealing with the ultimate presuppositions of any field of inquiry." [35] No universal set of criteria exists against which one can measure the truth of his or her presuppositions.

[34] Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind,* pp. 430-431.

[35] Gilkey, *Catholicism Confronts Modernity,* pp. 164-165.

While there is unlimited possibility of debate and revision in theology as in other disciplines, no final proof or falsification is available.[36]

The impossibility of final proof of the fundamental presuppositions of any discipline is accentuated in theology. Although any field of inquiry can come up against what Toulmin has called limit questions and thus the need to use religious symbols, theology deals directly and explicitly with the mystery of the divine. Because the reality of God is a mystery rather than a problem to be solved, "proof" is particularly out of place. If the symbol "God" could be verified on the rational plane, one would not be dealing with God. The existence of God cannot be verified as one would verify the existence of a finite object. Part of the ambiguity of metaphysical doctrines of God for Gilkey is their tendency to immanentize the divine. The definition of God in terms of particular metaphysical categories, such as those of process thought, runs the risk of losing the sense of transcendence: ". . . these structures of being, universal and necessary though they be, are in the last analysis themselves immanent structures; they define the most permanent and universal characteristics of the given system of things, but they have difficulty expressing anything that transcends that system as its ground, source, or end."[37] There is a gap between the God of the philosophers, who is made part of a metaphysical system, and the radically transcendent God of religious belief.[38] It is for this reason that Gilkey defends the permanent importance in religion of mythical forms of thought. Myth captures the uniqueness and mystery of God in a way that the categories of philosophical theology cannot.[39]

A second aspect of Gilkey's attempt to meet the charge of fideism is his defense of the appropriateness of the rational or

[36] Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind,* p. 438.

[37] Gilkey, *Religion and the Scientific Future* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 112.

[38] Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind,* pp. 441-442.

[39] Gilkey, *Religion and the Scientific Future,* p. 116 and pp. 179-180, ftn. 19. See also *Catholicism Confronts Modernity,* pp. 84 ff.

intellectual moment within theology. The theologian has a responsibility to locate the points of contact between the particular symbols of his or her tradition and the widest reaches of experience. The theological movement originates in the faith insight of the theologian, shaped by the particular community to which he or she belongs, but it cannot stop there.[40] With Stephen Toulmin, Gilkey points to the necessity of investigating the " warrants " or kinds of argument appropriate to theology. Such " reasonable argument " can show the fidelity of theological categories to the meanings of a tradition, to concrete human experience, and to the reflective categories of thought operative in the theologian's cultural and historical setting.[41] Such an elucidation of the " depth, concreteness, and width " of the intelligibility of religious symbols stops short, however, of proof:

> ...however important the more objective criteria of tradition, contemporary experience, and width or scope of relevance may be, religious symbols are not validated by these means, for such objective testing communicates no sacral presence to our existence.[42]

Real proof would involve a " communication of sacral presence," and this cannot be produced by a process of rational argumentation.

In Gilkey's latest work, *Reaping the Whirlwind,* he moves more in the direction of a natural theology than in any of his earlier writings. One theme of the book is an analysis of the " ontological categories or factors at work universally in temporal and historical being." [43] This movement beyond the " ontic " analysis of the experience of ultimacy in *Naming the Whirlwind* provides the basis for a form of natural theology by showing the "intelligibility and so the reality of a theistic interpretation " of the structure of history.[44] In fact, in the

[40] Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind,* p. 452.
[41] *Ibid.,* p. 460.
[42] *Ibid.,* p. 464.
[43] Gilkey, *Reaping the Whirlwind,* p. 369, ftn. 5.
[44] *Ibid.,* p. 127.

elaboration of a tentative form of a natural theology, Gilkey distinguishes his position from that of Paul Tillich and compares it to the metaphysical argument of David Tracy. Unlike Tillich, Gilkey describes destiny and freedom as comprising an ontological structure of being as historical and then, significantly, recognizes the relevance of an argument that that ontological structure "entails its own deepest grounds."[45] In clear contrast to Tillich, and, in some respects, in distinction from his own critique of natural theology in *Naming the Whirlwind*, Gilkey finds to his own "surprise" that a "natural theology begins to appear as one moment in the preparation for a systematic theology."[46] If classical forms of natural theology saw such argument as a form of "proof" of God's existence, however, Gilkey stops short of this conclusion. Natural theology is a "necessary but not sufficient" basis for theological argument. Faith remains essential to any attempt at proof. Rational argument "articulates but does not create" the fundamental religious apprehensions.[47] The basis for a recognition of the truth of the religious claim remains the insight and affirmations of faith, but rational argument can "add intellectual understanding and so intellectual assent to those affirmations through which a creative existence is possible. Natural theology brings what is deeply felt concerning the ultimate coherence of the universe and existence of God to intellectual expression, but it does not create the deep religious 'feelings.'"[48] The force of Gilkey's own ontological argument that the structure of history entails the existence of God depends on a prior intuition based on faith of such an ultimate coherence. The theologian cannot depend simply on sufficient reason or the requirements of logic.

This appeal to the relevance of logic and sufficient reason itself must be supported by the intuition—or the "faith"—that coher-

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 370, ft. 13.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 302.
[48] *Ibid.*

ence is constitutive of reality as a whole and therefore that our desire to explain exhaustively and to understand coherently faithfully reflects the structure of the real. The validity of this intuition cannot by the nature of the case be demonstrated by rational argument, for the relevance of rational demonstration for that which undergirds experience is now the very question at issue.[49]

Such a faith in ultimate coherence is not universal. It is very much shaped by history and culture, and thus, while it seems self-evident to some, it is mere fancy or illusion to others. With reference to the latter, rational argumentation alone does not suffice. The recognition of the validity of the argument rests on an initial religious intuition of the logos character of reality and thus of the universal revelation of God, and this intuition, again, is not a human work.[50]

Because a religious intuition shapes one's metaphysical vision, Gilkey points to the interpenetration of his own Christian point of view and his ontological analysis of the structure of history. While the philosophical analysis of common human experience and interpretation of the Christian fact are independent and distinct in Tracy's system, they overlap in Gilkey's. Common human experience is perceived in light of Christian symbols, and Christian symbols are perceived in light of common human experience.[51] Moreover, because Christian faith represents conversion to a unique way of seeing things and is not simply a re-presentation of universal faith, the kerygmatic phase of Gilkey's theology, the interpretation of Christian symbols, is not simply an application of philosophical criteria. There is a "break" in Gilkey's theological argument in the movement from ontological analysis to interpretation of the Christian fact. There is not one sustained argument but a *series* of arguments "whose limits, whose types of evidence and whose modes of intelligibility are clearly discriminated."[52] The thrust of this position is the rejection of universal criteria applicable in funda-

[49] *Ibid.*
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 430, ftn. 6.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 373, ftn. 1.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

mental as well as systematic theology. The correlation of the two sources of theology does not take place from some neutral vantage point, accessible in principle to any one, but from the standpoint of Christian faith. Once again, what grounds the validity of theological argument is an intuition of faith which cannot be *created* by rational demonstration, however much it is supplemented or given intellectual respectability by theological reflection.

Conclusion

I. The Basic Structure of Human Experience

We might now try to isolate and critically assess the key differences between Langdon Gilkey and David Tracy. Both authors present an analysis of the basic structure of human experience. Each is concerned to raise the implicit or tacit fundamental presuppositions of human knowing and acting to conscious awareness. The resulting phenomenologies of human experience highlight what can be called a religious dimension. In crucial life-situations an experience of ultimacy or transcendence is felt which is best articulated through religious symbols. The "ultimates in secular experience" explored by Gilkey in *Naming the Whirlwind*, the ontology of history presented in *Reaping the Whirlwind*, and the limit-experiences and basic faith traced by Tracy in *Blessed Rage for Order* are expressions of religious meaning which must be articulated in the terms of religious discourse if one is to achieve an adequate human self-understanding. Both men are highly critical of a secularistic rejection of the meaningfulness of religious symbol, not because it contradicts the Christian or some other particular religious faith, but because it represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the actual character of lived experience.

While Gilkey and Tracy both point to the basic importance of the religious horizon of human experience, however, the *character* of this experience appears differently to each author, and it is this difference which explains in large part the divergence in their theological methods. For Tracy the underlying reality

in human experience is "basic faith," a confidence in the ultimate meaningfulness of human life. Those thinkers who explicitly deny such an ultimate meaningfulness, for example existentialist philosophies of the absurd, are caught in a contradiction of performance and concept. In all that we think and do as human beings, we implicitly affirm ultimate meaning rather than an absence of meaning. The logical referent of this trust, Tracy maintains, is that reality referred to by the word "God." Thus an understanding of the basic character of human experience compels one rationally to affirm the existence of God. A theistic affirmation is essential to the rationally most satisfactory metaphysical system.

For Gilkey, as we have seen, the basic character of experience is marked by more ambiguity. The fundamental questions of life do compel human beings to look beyond the world. Only a transcendent reality can satisfactorily enable an individual to cope with the facts of contingency, relativity, temporality, and the ambiguity of human freedom. A recognition of the *need for* an ultimate or transcendent reality, however, is no guarantee that God exists. In fact, the negative experiences of life, for example the problem of evil, can lead some individuals to deny the existence of God. Ultimacy can appear in negative or positive form, and there is no way to show rationally that the negative form of this experience is logically self-contradictory. If God's existence is to be affirmed, it must come as the result of a particular revelation from God and not as an inference from the character of basic faith. While for Tracy the universal presence of basic faith is an implicit belief in God, there is no such universal reality in the theology of Langdon Gilkey. *Some* individuals interpret their limit experiences in theistic terms, but they do so only because they have received a particular revelation of the sacred through specific religious symbols. To those individuals who have not experienced such a hierophany of divine being, there is no way of rationally proving that God exists. In a sense, faith is primary for both Gilkey and Tracy. It is the existence of basic faith for Tracy which makes the rational demonstration of God's existence pos-

sible. But for Tracy, and this is crucial, this basic faith is a *universal* reality. It is also an implicit experience which can be theoretically displayed in the terms of a philosophical or theological system. No one is thus in principle excluded from the "disclosure" form of theological argument Tracy employs. From Gilkey's point of view, on the contrary, there is no universal experience, either direct or inferred, of the reality of God. Universal criteria of theological truth, therefore, those which can be appealed to when the *existence*, as distinct from the *question* of God, is at stake, do not exist.

What lies beneath this disagreement, in this author's view, is a fundamental difference in the understanding of the relationship of nature and grace or, in more Protestant terms, of Law and Gospel. Gilkey's own roots in dialectical theology run deeper than one might expect having read his critique of the dialectical tradition. Unlike a theologian like Rudolf Bultmann, Gilkey does not want to restrict the working of grace to those individuals who hear the Christian gospel. But, like Bultmann, Gilkey wants to preserve the importance of special moments of experience in which one perceives, in a deep personal way, a divine revelation in Christian or in some other form. It is in such recognizable hierophanies that the "gospel" is heard which releases us from an otherwise alienated and inauthentic state of existence. In contrast, Tracy, following Ogden, stresses a universal working of grace not tied to such specific occurrences. As Ogden has noted, the modern theologian in the liberal tradition does not need to look for some "new" event of God's grace other than that present in human life as such. It is this, Ogden believes, which distinguishes his own work (and, I would suggest, Tracy's) from traditional Protestant and Catholic positions in which a clear distinction of Law and Gospel or nature and supernature is maintained.[53] Ogden finds the whole notion of "natural" man an abstraction. He is

[53] Schubert Ogden, "Present Prospects for Empirical Theology," in *The Future of Empirical Theology*, ed. by Bernard Meland (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 75.

critical of Rahner, for example, for locating the final depth of existence as graced not in existence as such but in a "second, altogether gratuitous act of God's grace." [54] Ogden's own view is that the mystery of existence is thoroughly "natural" and that the divine-human relationship is as natural to God as it is to man, particularly when seen from a process point of view. This perspective is, I believe, shared by Tracy and lies behind his methodological differences with Gilkey. The precise difference between the two authors will become clearer as Tracy, in particular, works out more fully a doctrine of grace and a doctrine of God.

The difference between Tracy and Gilkey is somewhat blurred by the latter's recognition that a phenomenology of human experience can reveal a positive as well as a negative experience of ultimacy. The phenomenon of birth, for example, can be perceived as a "hierophany" of the sacred. Contingency in such instances "is suddenly experienced against the horizon of ultimacy and infinity—at first as the creation of that infinity and then as the medium or symbol of an ultimate being which works in us, pulsates through us, and creatively realizes itself in our powers and acts." [55] In such cases, it is not so much the particular symbol system of a religious group which stimulates the experience of the sacred, as an ordinary life experience which we all as human beings can presumably share. Gilkey may be quite correct in his observation that contingency *need not* be experienced in this positive form. Contingency can also take the form of an experience of the void, of the thrownness of human existence. But is there not at least the possibility in some cases of leading an individual by a philosophical argument to see the phenomenon of birth in a new light, in positive rather than negative terms, as a disclosure of the sacred? "Metaphysical necessity" would certainly be too strong a description of the truth insight which is achieved in such cases,

[54] Ogden, "The Reformation We Want," *The Anglican Theological Review*, 54 (1972), pp. 270-271.

[55] Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind*, p. 319.

but it is not at all clear why rational argument cannot itself arouse and not merely follow from such a religious apprehension.

This possibility of a rational verification of religious claims is even more emphasized in Gilkey's most recent book. His construction of an ontology of history in theistic terms, as he himself admits, is a tentative form of natural theology. But he warns us that his argument will convince only those who already view reality in religious terms, and that he cannot demonstrate the validity of theistic belief. Gilkey's position hinges on his conviction that ontological argumentation by itself cannot verify a religious claim. However, one should be careful here to distinguish strict metaphysical proof, as attempted by Tracy, from rational verification. One might agree with Gilkey that a metaphysical demonstration of the existence of God cannot be managed; the " necessity " of God's existence is too strong a claim. But is it not possible that rational argumentation can in some cases ground a judgment of the truth of the theistic claim? The persuasive force of less strict forms of theological argumentation, for example of Tracy's own " criteria of relative adequacy," needs more careful examination. The key issue, as Gilkey himself observes, is the relevance of rational demonstration to the religious intuition.

II. Theological Argument and Religious Assent

More than the ambiguity of experience is at stake in the disagreement of Gilkey and Tracy on the nature of theological verification. Even if Tracy were right in his identification of basic faith, even if confidence that life is ultimately meaningful were a universal rule, rational argument from this experience would not for Gilkey confirm the theistic claim. In Gilkey's understanding there is a gap between the motive of belief and the motive of intelligibility. The motive of belief in God cannot be rational argumentation alone. We do not *decide*, on the basis of a rational assessment of the evidence, to believe in God. An encounter with the sacred, mediated by religious symbols,

grounds religious assent. The human role in religious assent is perceived by Gilkey in more passive than active terms. A hierophany appears which converts us to a religious view of reality. Once this conversion has occurred, one can attempt to make it intelligible. Such rational support for religious belief is particularly important today. But without the experience of a manifestation of the sacred, rational argumentation is to no avail. It is this fact which imposes the limits on any theological effort to "verify" religious claims. This is so both because the initial assent of faith is dependent more on prereflective than reflective impulses, and because the mystery of God cannot be captured in the terms of a rational argument.

That model of religious assent appropriate to theological argument employed by Tracy clearly stresses an active human role in the judgment of religious truth. The underlying reality is still faith, the intuitive trust which Tracy calls basic faith. This implicit confidence in the ultimate meaning of life exists before and makes possible any effort rationally to justify religious belief. To ground reflectively the cognitive value of this intuitive trust, however, Tracy relies on a rational articulation of its necessary implications. Theological argumentation is intended by Tracy to lead the reader to a reflection on his or her experience and to the active interpretation of that experience in theistic terms. The affirmation of God's existence prompted by theological argumentation is more an inference from experience than the result of a passive encounter with an explicit hierophany of the sacred. The affirmation of God occurs because it best fits the basic character of our experience. In an analogous fashion, existential verification of, for example, Christological claims involves an active moment of decision. Only after a critical assessment of such claims, in light of explicit criteria of relative adequacy to experience, is a claim to cognitive validity possible. Here again the key to religious assent is an active decision or judgment of truth.

These two different models of religious assent, one more passive and the other more active, lie behind the different ap-

proaches of Gilkey and Tracy to the problem of theological verification. This is not to say that Tracy would describe the totality of religious experience in the active, decisional terms appropriate to theological discourse. He does not overlook the importance of the pre-reflective level of experience stressed by Gilkey. Symbols, myths, stories carry a disclosive power which conceptual systems lack. On the level of lived experience, individuals are moved to new ways of seeing the world and of self-understanding more by concrete images than by metaphysical argumentation. The goal of Tracy's fundamental theology is no Hegelian transposition of obscure religious symbols into philosophical concepts. Nevertheless, he does recognize the possibility of a rational verification of the theistic claim. He also affirms the possibility of theoretically articulating criteria of existential verification and thus making possible a reflective analysis and comparison of the truth of different religious symbol systems. Emphasizing as he does that an unbeliever can construct theological arguments for the validity of particular symbols, he clearly recognizes a rational determination of the truth of religious symbols which does not depend on a prior intuitive experience of the sacred through such symbols. Although conceptual analysis does not ground every act of religious assent—the assent of faith is not simply identified with the assent to theological argument—it is essential in Tracy's model of theology that formal theological argument does have the potential to ground a judgment of the truth of particular religious symbols.

What I would now like to suggest briefly is a way of understanding and mediating the difference in the models of religious assent presented by Gilkey and Tracy. My analysis is based in large part on the typology of religious experience constructed by Louis Dupré in his excellent philosophical treatment of religion in *The Other Dimension*.[56] Although Dupré does not have Gilkey and Tracy explicitly in mind, he does sketch the two models of religious experience reflected in their works. One

[56] Louis Dupré, *The Other Dimension* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972).

model of religion described by Dupré is a passive form of experience characterized by feeling and a direct encounter with the reality of the sacred. It is that experience of the *mysterium fascinans et tremendum* explored by Rudolf Otto in his classical treatise *The Idea of the Holy*.[57] This model of religion, which Dupré believes is more typical of the past than of the present, is close to that pattern which Gilkey has chosen as the normative pattern of religious experience. The second model described by Dupré is more typical of our contemporary secular age. In this period the direct experience of hierophanies of the sacred is less common. Instead, the religious individual "hears about" religious realities described in sacred writings and religious tradition and education. The believer is no longer overwhelmed by an experience of the sacred, but reflects on his or her experience and then actively decides to adopt a religious point of view. In this model of religious assent, aptly called "faith," the believer "reflects upon certain ambiguous experiences and then interprets them—often hesitantly—in a religious way."[58] Dupré describes the difference between the two approaches in these terms:

> Religious attitudes today seem to be adopted as personal and reflective answers to experiences which present themselves in a questioning rather than in an assertive way. The experience preceding the religious act invites decision rather than passive submission. This is the precise point which distinguishes faith, that is, the active and reflective religious attitude, from the passive feeling which was predominant in the total religious experience of the past.[59]

Dupré stresses far more than does Tracy the gap between the evidence of experience and the assent of faith. An act of will converts the ambiguities of experience into the total certitude which for Dupré is essential to religious commitment. While there is here, I would argue, an exaggeration of the "leap" of faith at the expense of rational credibility and a neglect

[57] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, tr. by John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

[58] Dupré, *The Other Dimension*, p. 27.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

of the continuing possibility of doubt in the assent of faith, Dupré's emphasis on an active, decisional moment in faith brings him close to David Tracy. Both men provide an alternative to the passive experience of the sacred stressed by Gilkey.

While both forms of religious experience can be identified on the contemporary scene, the second, as Dupré emphasizes, is far more common. It is also more applicable when one is discussing the persuasive force of theological argumentation. Gilkey's mistake is to restrict his focus to the passive, feeling model of religion when he turns to the issue of the validity of theological claims. There is a certain irony in this, because his own analysis of secular culture is quite close to Dupré's assessment. He too sees an absence of explicit hierophanies of the sacred, yet insists on grounding the verification of religious claims in the last analysis on such experiences. To the extent that an alternative indirect, decisional form of religious experience is recognized, a rational grounding of theological claims becomes possible.

I began this essay by noting the concern in revisionist method to make theology a form of public discourse. It seems to me that there are two conditions which must be met for this move to occur. The first is on the *psychological* or *epistemological* level and refers to the experiential character of the assent to the truth of a religious claim. A consideration of this issue would involve the question of the extent to which such assent can be motivated by theological argument. To limit such a recognition of religious truth to the explicit experience of the sacred, as Gilkey does, is to undermine the force of theological argumentation and the public character of theological discourse. There must be a wider audience for a recognition of the truth of theological assertions than that group of individuals who have already been moved by religious symbols to an explicit faith commitment. The second condition for theology as public discourse is on the *logical* level and refers to the location of theological criteria. Here too criteria not only of meaning but also of truth must be sought which are in some sense universal and which reach beyond the boundaries of an explicit

faith community. Tracy has sought to secure this universality by relying on metaphysics and the reality of basic faith which it explores. I would emphasize once again, however, that the search for criteria of theological truth need not be restricted to the metaphysical framework of argumentation that Tracy provides. Less rigid, non-metaphysical forms of argumentation are clearly possible, as the current *Wissenschaftstheorie* debate in Germany [60] as well as strands of reflection in analytical philosophy [61] clearly suggest. What needs to be preserved, I would maintain, is the recognition that rational argumentation in a wide sense can validate religious claims. Without this possibility, any attempt to make theology a form of public discourse is endangered.

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[60] See, for example, Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science,* tr. by Francis McDonagh (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1976); Gerhard Sauter, *Wissenschaftstheoretische Kritik der Theologie. Die Theologie und die neure wissenschaftstheoretische Diskussion* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1973); and H. Peukert, *Wissenschaftstheorie-Handlungstheorie-Fundamentale Theologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1976).

[61] See, for example, Basil Mitchell, *The Justification of Religious Belief* (New York: Macmillan, 1973) and Patrick Sherry, *Religion, Truth and Language-games* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1977).

INTRINSICALLY EVIL ACTS: AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE MIND OF ST. THOMAS

THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE between the official magisterium and many moral theologians about the absolute prohibition of contraception, direct sterilization and abortion, masturbation, homosexual activity, and so forth derives in large measure from a more fundamental disagreement on the question of intrinsically evil acts. The magisterium assumes that there are certain physical actions which are morally evil *ex objecto*, that is, so morally disordered in themselves that they never can be justified in any circumstances or for any purpose.[1] Many contemporary theologians dispute this. They assert, in various ways, that, while such actions are in themselves prima-facie evil (premoral, non-moral, physical, ontic evil), they cannot be declared morally evil prior to a consideration of circumstances and end.[2]

It has been assumed generally that the magisterium's position is more faithful to the Thomistic tradition and the mind of St. Thomas. But some recent studies have raised some doubts. From a careful analysis of Thomas's teaching about the possibility of dispensations from the decalogue, Franz Scholz has concluded that, although Thomas himself did not reject the notion of intrinsically evil acts, he did formulate a basis for such a rejection by clearly distinguishing between physical and moral

[1] Recent examples of this theology at work are the *Declaration on Sexual Ethics (Persona Humana)* issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on December 29, 1975, and the response of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to the American hierarchy on sterilization (*Documentum circa sterilizationem in nosocomiis catholicis* [Prot. 2027/69]) issued on March 13, 1975.

[2] The whole contemporary discussion, of course, is considerably more nuanced. A clear and handy summary is provided by Richard A. McCormick, S.J., in *Ambiguity in Moral Choice:* the 1973 Père Marquette Theology Lecture, and his "Notes on Moral Theology" in *Theological Studies* over the past few years.

evil (e.g. between the factual notion of killing and the value notion of murder).[3] And in a careful textual study of the writings of St. Thomas, John Giles Milhaven has argued that, although Thomas did admit the existence of "negative moral absolutes," his thought is "more akin to contemporary ethical reflection than one would gather from today's Thomists."[4] Milhaven proposed his interpretation of the Thomistic texts as a tentative hypothesis. For, he said, "to penetrate behind the borrowed formulae to the genuine dynamics of Thomas's synthesis on a given question requires . . . an understanding of the historical development of the question up to his time . . . ."[5]

Milhaven's caution was appropriate. Odon Lottin long ago warned theologians about the need to read St. Thomas in his historical context.[6] Lottin pointed out that one should distrust merely speculative studies and systematic expositions which mix up texts of different dates with no regard for changes in St. Thomas's meaning; and one must exercise great care in using his commentators, even his immediate disciples, since they frequently tried to develop, correct or assimilate his thought to their own. To read St. Thomas correctly, he said, one must consider his sources and compare his texts with those of the masters whose writings he knew.

That is what this study intends to do. First we will cite certain texts of St. Thomas which have led his readers to believe

[3] Franz Scholz, "Durch ethische Grenzsituation aufgeworfene Normenprobleme," *Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift* 123 (1975) 341-355.

[4] John G. Milhaven, "Moral Absolutes and Thomas Aquinas," *Absolutes in Moral Theology?* (ed. Charles E. Curran). Corpus Instrumentorum: Washington, D.C., 1968, pp. 154-185.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 160. Milhaven notes that the work of Dom Lottin in the thirties and forties provides valuable material on natural law in the medieval period but that he never envisioned the contemporary debate and the contemporary theological problematic. Cf. Odon Lottin, *Le Droit Naturel chez S. Thomas d'Aquin et ses prédécesseurs.* Charles Beyaert: Bruges, 1931; and *Psychologie et Morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (Vol. II). Abbaye du Mont César: Louvain, 1948.

[6] Odon Lottin, "Pour un Commentaire historique de la morale de S. Th. d'Aquin," *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 11 (1939) 270-285. (This is reprinted in his *Psychologie et Moral* 3/2). Also see Odon Lottin, "Comment interpréter et utiliser Saint Thomas d'Aquin?" *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* (1960) 57-76.

that he thought that some acts are intrinsically evil, that is to say, that they contain some inherent moral deformity which makes them so evil in themselves that no good end or circumstances can make them licit. Secondly, we will review the question briefly in the historical context in which St. Thomas wrote.[7] Then, in the light of this, we will examine the texts of St. Thomas and compare his thought with that of the other masters of his time.

I. Indications of "Intrinsically Evil Acts"

St. Thomas never uses the expression *intrinsically evil act.* But he does say that some actions may never be done under any circumstances or for any end.

In his *Commentary on the Sentences* he says that if one intends an evil end, the act is evil; but if one intends a good end the act is not necessarily good, since it is possible for an act to be evil of itself and so in no way permissible.[8] The reason these acts may not be done for a good end is that they already are joined to an evil proximate end.[9] Also he says that lying has an inordination *de se* and therefore is not permissible even to help one's neighbor.[10]

In *Quodlibet* 8 he says that some actions like lying and murder (*homicidium* not *occisio hominis*) have an inordination inseparably joined to them and so never may be performed.[11] And in his disputed question *De Malo* he says that it is not licit to steal in order to give an alms. The thief may have a good intention, but he has a bad will. His end is good, but his deed is bad.[12] Some acts are bad, Thomas explains, because of a bad

[7] I have made a more complete survey of the doctrine of the predecessors of St. Thomas in "Moral Absolutes in the Predecessors of St. Thomas," *Theological Studies* 38 (1977). The full texts of the manuscript sources referred to in the present article are transcribed in that earlier survey. Our present intention is to analyze and interpret the data presented there in a way that will illumine our present question. Also I have added here an analysis of the thought of St. Bonaventure.

[8] *In II Sent.*, d. 40, q. 1, a. 2.

[9] *In II Sent.*, d. 40, *expositio textus.*

[10] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, a. 3, ad 6.

[11] *Quodlibetum Octavum*, a. 14.

[12] *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 8.

intention (e. g. to give an alms out of a desire for vainglory); but others are bad *secundum se* (e. g. theft, adultery, murder, etc.).[13] A good end, he argues, does not make such acts good. For, as Dionysius said, "*Bonum . . . est ex tota et integra causa, malum autem ex singularibus defectibus.*" Therefore an action is bad if either it or its end is bad.[14] Similarly, a man who fornicates is not excused from sin by a good intention any more than a man who steals to give an alms, for fornication according to its very nature has an inordinate end.[15] The same must be said about adultery and lying: these actions may not be done for any good purpose.[16]

In his *Summa Theologiae* Thomas explains that some actions are good because they are prescribed or bad because they are forbidden; but other actions are prescribed because they are good or forbidden because they are bad. Therefore human law cannot render just an act which *de se* is opposed to natural justice, for instance theft or adultery.[17] Similarly Thomas argues that lying is always sinful. For lying is *secundum se* evil; therefore there is no way that lying can ever become good or licit.[18] Just as one is not permitted to steal in order to give an alms, so he is not permitted to lie in order to prevent any harm: for lying is sinful not merely because of the harm it does but also because of its own inordination.[19]

II. The Historical Context

A. *The General Doctrine*

Like Thomas, Peter of Poitiers[20] also seems to hold that cer-

[13] *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 3; cf. q. 2, a. 4.
[14] *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 4, ad 2.
[15] *De Malo*, q. 15, a. 1, ad 3.
[16] *De Malo*, q. 15, a. 1, ad 5.
[17] *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 57, a. 3, ad 2, 3.
[18] *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 110, a. 3.
[19] *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 110, a. 3, ad 4.
[20] Peter of Poitiers lectured at Paris from 1167 to 1193, when he was made chancellor of the University. He wrote his *Sentences* at Paris between 1168 and 1176, probably before 1170.

tain actions are intrinsically evil. He says that some actions are indifferent: these are morally good or bad depending on the purpose for which they are done. But there are also some actions which never can be done without sin (*quae sine praevaricatione fieri nequeunt*). These actions are *per se* evil. Good will does not make them good; rather they corrupt the good will that performs them.[21] Thus it is sinful to tell a lie even to save our neighbor's life.[22]

However, the medieval theologians were forced to probe more deeply into the question. They had to face a problem raised by certain incidents reported in the Bible. Here, it seemed, God had commanded Abraham to murder, Hosea to fornicate, the Jews to steal, Jacob to lie, the patriarchs to take concubines, and so forth. Therefore they raised the question: Can God's command or dispensation make such evil actions licit?

Peter of Poitiers responds that those actions *quae sine praevaricatione fieri nequeunt* can become good and meritorious when they are done under divine inspiration and out of a desire for God's justice. In fact, he says, no act is so bad in itself that it cannot become good if it is performed under divine inspiration or command. The reason Peter gives is simply that God is above all laws, and man must obey the Lawgiver before any law.[23]

Does this mean that God can command actions contrary to natural law? Peter answers that the natural law precepts in the decalogue should be understood in a formal not a material sense: "Thou shalt not *unjustly*. . . ."[24]

Therefore, Peter concludes, Abraham did not sin in willing to kill his innocent son, because he was not motivated by hatred but by a desire to obey God. The Jews did not sin in taking the Egyptian treasures, because they did not act out of avarice but in obedience to God.[25] And the patriarchs did not sin in

[21] *Sententiarum Libri Quinque*, Lib. II, c. 16, Col. 1003 (PL 211).
[22] *Ibid.*, Lib. IV, c. 5, col. 1153-6.
[23] *Ibid.*, Lib. II, c. 16, col. 1003.
[24] *Ibid.*, Lib. IV, c. 4, col. 1151-2.
[25] *Ibid.*, Lib. IV, c. 4. col. 1151-2.

having sexual intercourse with women who were not their wives: their action was not fornication, since their intention was to procreate more children to worship the one true God.[26]

Therefore, for Peter of Poitiers, it is not the material act (killing an innocent person, taking the property of another against his will, sexual intercourse outside of marriage) *quae sine praevaricatione fieri nequeunt.* Rather it is the unjust performance of these actions that never can be justified. If God commands such acts they are not unjust and so may be done for a good reason.

William of Auxerre[27] also seems to imply that certain actions are intrinsically evil. Some actions, he says, are sinful independently of any extrinsic prohibition. For instance, fornication and adultery are not evil because they are forbidden; they are forbidden because they are evil.[28] William describes these actions as evil *secundum se.* He says that they cannot become morally good under any circumstance[29] and they cannot be ordered to a good end.[30] In fact, he says, not even God can make them licit.[31]

However, in discussing the biblical texts William explains his meaning. Adultery and stealing in so far as they are such (*in quantum talia sunt*) can never be done for a good end, because in so far as they are such they already include an evil end. For adultery and stealing as such are adultery and stealing done *ex libidine,* i. e. out of a desire to enjoy a creature independently of God. And certainly there never can be justification for preferring a creature to God. But the same acts in themselves (*inquantum in se est*) can be justified by a good

[26] *Ibid.*, Lib. V, c. 17, col. 1261-4.,

[27] William of Auxerre was one of the great secular masters at the University of Paris at the beginning of the thirteenth century. He composed his *Summa Aurea,* a commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, after 1215, perhaps after 1222, certainly before 1229.

[28] *Summa Aurea* (Frankfort, 1964), f. 71^{r}.

[29] *Ibid.*, f. 167^{r}.

[30] *Ibid.*, f. 86^{r}.

[31] *Ibid.*, f. 167^{r}-167^{v}.

end. For if God commands them they no longer need be done *ex libidine*.[32]

Therefore, for William of Auxerre, acts which are *secundum se* evil are not material actions like stealing or fornication. Rather they are such actions done out of sinful motivation, acts done *ex libidine*, in which a man prefers a creature to God. The fundamental reason why they are morally impermissible is not found in the matter of the act but in man's bad will (*quia ea male utitur homo*).[33]

Accordingly, an action which is *secundum se* evil is already defined in moral terms: it is an action done *ex libidine*. The statement that adultery is *secundum se* evil is a tautology, affirming that sinful adultery is always sinful. It is not the material action but man's bad will that is always wrong.

William of Paris[34] says that natural law is born with and inseparable from human nature. It obliges with an indissoluble and indispensable bond.[35] Accordingly, there are certain actions that are *in se*, *per se* or essentially evil.[36]

However, he also says that God dispensed the holy kings and patriarchs, so that they could have many wives and concubines. For God knew that their motive would be pure, not carnal lust but a desire to generate children who would worship God.[37] He also explains what he means when he says that some actions are *per se* or essentially evil. They are evil from the fact that they are such as they are named: adultery as such, perjury as such, robbery as such.[38] Thus William of Paris, like William of Auxerre, defines these actions in formal not material terms.

[32] *Ibid.*, f. 71^{r}-71^{v}, 86^{r}.

[33] *Ibid.*, f. 71^{r}.

[34] William of Paris (William of Auvergne), master of theology at Paris from 1223 and Bishop of Paris from 1228 until his death in 1249, composed some thirty monographs which were gathered together to form a kind of Christian encyclopedia, the *Magisterium Divinale*.

[35] *Opera Omnia* (Paris, 1674), p. 20.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 526-7.

[37] *Ibid.*. p. 25.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 526-7.

Philip the Chancellor [39] says that even God cannot command anyone to steal or fornicate; for if he did, he would be commanding against himself.[40] Philip then probes more deeply than any of his predecessors.

Philip distinguishes between the matter of an act and its motivation and says that no material act has such a deformity in itself that it cannot be done for a good end.[41] Knowingly to kill an innocent person or to have sexual intercourse with many women or with a woman who is not one's wife is against natural law because it is against what nature as reason dictates. But God can command such acts because only the matter of the act is defective. However, God cannot command these acts if their end is bad. He can command a man to have sexual relations with a prostitute but not to fornicate, for *fornication* implies that the act is done *ex libidine*. Similarly, he can command a man to kill an innocent person but not to kill out of a desire for vengeance. Also, he points out, if a man kills an innocent person on his own authority (i. e. when not authorized by God or the civil law), he does so *ex libidine*; hence his act cannot be referred to a good end.[42]

Thus, for Philip, no action (killing an innocent person, taking the goods of another, extramarital sex) is so morally corrupt or deformed in itself that it can never be justified by a good end. What cannot be ordered to a good end is an act that is joined to a sinful motive, an act done *ex libidine*. For such an act is sinful by definition, since it implies formal and voluntary disobedience to God. Thus when theologians say, for instance, that fornication has such a deformity in itself that it can never be ordered to a good end, they are not speaking of the material act of fornication but of fornication *ex libidine*, fornication coupled with a sinful will.

[39] Phillip the Chancellor taught theology at Paris sometime before 1210 and was appointed Chancellor of the diocese of Paris in 1218, holding that important post until his death in 1236. His *Summa de Bono* was composed near the end of his life, probably around 1230.

[40] *Cod. Vat. lat.* 7669, f. 142^{v}-143^{r}.

[41] *Ibid.*, f. 142^{r}.

[42] *Ibid.*, f. 142^{v}-143^{r}.

Alexander of Hales [43] says that some actions may be performed for a good end but not all. For instance, he says, homicide may be done for the sake of justice. But stealing or lying may not be done for a good purpose, since the moral character of these acts is already determined.[44]

However, in discussing the question of the possibility of dispensations from natural law, Alexander reflects the doctrine of his predecessors. He says that dispensations are not given from those natural law precepts which describe man's obligations toward God but dispensations are given from the precepts which describe men's obligations to each other. Thus God dispensed the patriarchs from the natural law obligation of monogamy, so that they could increase the number of true believers. Their sexual behavior was justified because of its good purpose. Lamech's behavior, on the other hand, was not justified, because he took many wives *ex libidine*, not to generate children to worship the one true God.[45] Similarly, Alexander explains, homicide is justified if it is related to justice and the common good rather than to revenge or *libido occidendi*.[46]

Hugh of St. Cher [47], like his predecessors, says that there are some actions that are *in se* and *secundum se* evil, for instance stealing, fornication and the like. These acts are always evil no matter what their purpose or end might be.[48] However,

[43] Alexander of Hales left the faculty of arts to join the faculty of theology at the University of Paris sometime between 1210 and 1215. He became master of theology around 1221 and *magister regens* at least by 1229-31, continuing in this post until his death in 1245. He composed his *Commentary on the Sentences* between 1223 and 1227 and his disputed questions *De Polygamia et secundis nuptiis* and *De Repudio et divortio* between 1226 and 1236.

[44] *Glossa in quattuor libros Sententiarum* (Quaracchi, 1954). II, d. 40, #2, 3; II, d. 36, #8; I, d. 48, #12.

[45] *Ibid.*, IV, d. 33, #2; *Quaestiones Disputatae Antequam Esset Frater* (Quaracchi, 1960), III, q. 60, #17-19.

[46] *Glossa*, III, d. 37, #5.

[47] Hugh of St. Cher was among the first Dominicans at the University of Paris, where he taught from 1230 to 1235. During this period he wrote his *Commentary on the Sentences*. In 1244 he was made a Cardinal and was instrumental in bringing St. Thomas to Paris.

[48] *Cod. Vat. lat.* 1098, f. 78^{v}, 126^{v}.

he explains, the reason for this is that the terms used to describe these actions (*stealing, fornication*, etc.) imply that the act is immoral. *Stealing*, he says, names the act according to its bad circumstance, and *fornication* is the name of a deformed act in so far as it is deformed.[49] And so for Hugh also it is not the material act which is *secundum se* evil; rather it is the act already defined in language which implies that it is sinful. As William of Paris had noted, certain words are used to name an action not merely in its material aspect but precisely in so far as it is a sinful act.

Roland of Cremona[50] says that even God cannot command a man to do any action (e. g. fornication) in which there is a deformity, that is, an action which is *in se* and *secundum se* evil.[51] But, in line with his predecessors, he goes on to say that while God cannot dispense from natural law when it prescribes what is necessary for salvation and the preservation of the image of God in the soul (for instance love of God and neighbor), he can and does dispense from the other precepts.[52]

The *Summa Fratris Alexandri*[53] says that, although a man may kill another man to save his own life, he may never commit adultery for the same purpose.[54] The reason is that adultery is *secundum se* evil.[55] So are acts like stealing, usury, and

[49] *Ibid.*, f. 78^{v}, 76^{v}, 126^{v}.

[50] Roland of Cremona, originally from the University of Bologna, was the first Dominican master at Paris, where he taught from 1229 to 1230. From there he went to Toulouse where he composed his *Summa* around 1233.

[51] *Cod. Vat. Barb. lat.* 729, f. 500^{r}.

[52] *Ibid.*, f. 138^{v}. Here Roland distinguishes between things of first necessity and things of second necessity. Apparently this language was invented by William of Auxerre, but it never found its way into the writings of St. Thomas.

[53] The *Summa Fratris Alexandri* is a compilation taken from various sources, especially from the preexisting writings of Alexander of Hales and John of la Rochelle. It is the work of more than one redactor. The most important of these seem to have been John of la Rochelle and to some extent Alexander himself. This monumental collection was begun after 1236 and was practically complete in 1245, the year of Alexander's death.

[54] *Summa Fratris Alexandri* (Quaracchi, 1924-48), III/2, #358, ad 4, (533).

[55] *Ibid.*, III/2, #255, sol., ad 1, (361). Cf. III/2, #249, ad 3, (352); #369, sol., (553).

lying.[56] Hence a man may not lie even to save his friend's life.[57]

But the *Summa* goes on to explain that God can command actions contrary to natural law in so far as natural law orders creatures to creatures, not however in so far as it orders creatures to God.[58] God can command a man to have sexual intercourse with a woman who is not his wife or to take another man's property, because these actions only cause the privation of right order among creatures. But he cannot command a man to fornicate or to steal, because these words imply that the act is done *ex libidine*, which involves a privation of right order toward God.[59]

Similarly, incest as such (*in quantum huiusmodi*) is *secundum se* evil. But what counts as incest depends on human and divine law. The material act of sexual intercourse of brother and sister is not necessarily incest; it is incest only if it is inordinate.[60]

In discussing the fifth and sixth commandments the *Summa* takes the same approach. The fifth commandment forbids all inordinate killing; the sixth forbids all inordinate coitus.[61] Suicide or killing an innocent person is not necessarily inordinate killing, nor is sexual intercourse outside of marriage necessarily inordinate coitus. Unlike Lamech, Abraham and Jacob did not sin, because they did not use their women to satisfy lust but to generate children to worship God. Nor did Hosea sin with the prostitute, since he intended to generate children. Hosea's fornication was not inordinate in its end; it only had a defect of due matter, and this was supplied by God's dispensation.[62] Similarly, the *Summa* tells us, robbery as such (*secundum suam propriam rationem*) is always evil; but in stealing, as in homi-

[56] *Ibid.*, III/2, #380, sol., ad 1, 2, 3 (565-6); II/2, #395, v. (396).
[57] *Ibid.* II/2, #2, #395, v. (396).
[58] *Ibid.*, I, #276, sol., (383).
[59] *Ibid.*, I, #276, ad 3, (383).
[60] *Ibid.*, II/2, #667, sol., ad 1, 2, (645). Cf. III/2, #367, ad 1, (550).
[61] *Ibid,* III/2, #352, ad 4, (521).
[62] *Ibid.*, III/2, #354, ad 7, (524); #355, sol., (527); #368, ad 1, 2, (552); #366 ad 4, (549).

cide, the inordination of the matter can be removed by a newly added condition of the matter: that is to say, some new good is introduced into the act which outweighs or compensates for its badness.[63]

Thus we also find in the *Summa Fratris Alexandri* that some acts are *secundum se* evil and therefore never permissible for any cause. But these are not the material acts of killing an innocent person, taking another's property, or having intercourse with a blood relative, harlot or concubine. Rather they are such actions done *ex libidine*. The reason that they can never be justified is that they are by definition acts done with a bad end and a sinful will.

St. Albert the Great[64] also says that certain actions are *secundum se* evil, for instance stealing, usury, adultery, murder and the like.[65] Albert notes that earlier writers had said that these actions are evil once they are named: *mox nominati sunt mali*. This means, he explains, that the act is evil because of its evil end, because the name comes from the form, and in moral affairs the form comes from the end.[66]

Therefore, he says, when God dispenses from precepts of natural law, he removes the bad end and substitutes a good one. Thus God does not dispense from the precept against stealing as such, for *stealing* properly speaking means taking another's property against his will: *ex avaritiae libidine*. Rather he permits the material action separated from its evil end. Similarly, God did not dispense Abraham so that he could kill an innocent person *ex libidine irae vel vindictae*. Rather he allowed him to kill an innocent person for a good rather than

[63] *Ibid.* II/2, #400, sol., ad 1, (403). Cf. III/2, #390, sol., (580).

[64] St. Albert the Great began his teaching career at Cologne as early as 1228. He lectured at the University of Paris from 1240 to 1248, after which he returned to teach theology at the Dominican *studium* at Cologne. He wrote his *Commentary on the Sentences* between 1243-4 and 1249 and his *Summa de Bono*, it seems, immediately before his *Commentary*.

[65] *Commentarium in Libros Sententiarum* (Paris, 1893). *In III Sent.*, d. 37, a. 13, sol. ad 1, 8; d. 38, a. 1, sol. *Summa de Bono* (Münster i. W., 1951). Tract. 1, q. 2, a. 7, ad 6 (# 57).

[66] *Summa de Bono.* Tract. 1, q. 2, a. 7, ad 6 (#57).

an evil purpose. The same is true of Hosea: God allowed him to have extramarital intercourse (*concumbere cum non sua*) but not to have it out of sinful desire (*concumbere in libidine*).[67]

According to their names, Albert says, *theft, fornication, murder* designate acts done with a bad end. God cannot command these acts because of their bad end, but he can command the same acts by removing the bad end and substituting a good one.[68]

Therefore St. Albert's teaching follows the tradition before him. The fundamental reason why theologians can affirm that certain actions are never permissible under any circumstance or for any reason is that they are speaking of actions done with a bad end, i. e. actions done *ex libidine* in which a man prefers a creature to God. In other words, acts that are *secundum se* evil, that God never can command or allow by dispensation, are acts which are sinful by definition. God, of course, cannot authorize sin without contradicting himself. But the material acts themselves are not *secundum se* evil. They are not so evil or inordinate in themselves that God cannot command or allow them to achieve a greater good.

St. Bonaventure [69] also says that actions which are *secundum se* evil never can be good. Certain actions are necessarily evil (e. g. lying or hating God). Even God cannot make them good without going against himself.[70] The malice which is in such acts is inseparable from them. Hence one may not lie even to save an innocent person, nor may one steal to help the poor. Evil is not to be done that good may come of it.[71]

However, discussing the possibility of dispensations from the decalogue, Bonaventure explains that God cannot dispense from

[67] *Ibid.*, tract. 5, q. 1, a. 4, sol. (#532, 534).

[68] *Ibid.*, tract. 5, q. 1, a. 4, sol. (#534).

[69] *St. Bonaventure* (John Fidenza) lectured at Paris from 1248 to 1257. The date of his *Commentary on the Sentences* is uncertain. He began it sometime around 1249-50 and completed it sometime between 1251 and 1255. He probably had all or at least most of his *Commentary* completed before St. Thomas wrote his between 1254 and 1256.

[70] *In I Sent.*, d. 47, q. 4.

[71] *In II Sent.*, d. 40, a. 1, q. 1.

the precepts of the first tablet, because these forbid actions which are not only *in se* but *secundum se* evil. If God dispensed from these precepts he would be contradicting himself, since these precepts order men to their end which is God. The precepts of the second tablet, on the other hand, order men to their neighbor. God can dispense from these precepts, allowing actions which are bad *in se*, that is which have a deordination in respect to other men. For instance, God can allow a man to have sexual intercourse outside of marriage (*cognoscere non suam*). But if the action is also evil *secundum se*, that is if it also includes a deordination in respect to God, then God cannot make it licit. For instance, God cannot command a man to have extramarital intercourse out of sinful lust (*cognoscere non suam ex libidine*).

Therefore, he concludes, God could command Hosea to copulate with a harlot (*cognoscere non suam*) but not to fornicate in so far as *fornication* designates a sinful act (*cognoscere aliquam ex libidine*). Similarly, God could command a man to take another's property (*accipere rem alienam*) but not with a sinful will (*accipere ex libidine*).[72]

In the second book of his commentary Bonaventure explains that acts which are *secundum se* evil are those whose names imply that they are evil: *quae mox nominata coniuncta sunt malo*.[73] Certain names, like *adultery*, are used to describe actions not in so far as they are actions but in so far as they are deformed actions.[74]

In his third book he repeats this analysis. Acts which offend against other men are evil *in se*. But with divine dispensation these acts can be justified by a good intention. God can dispense if an action is bad in its matter but not if it is bad in its intention. An act done with an evil intention cannot be made good by a good end, since it already includes an evil end. God cannot make something good and bad at the same time.

[72] *In II Sent.*, d. 51, a. 1, q. 2.
[73] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, a.un., q. 2.
[74] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, dub. II.

He cannot permit sexual intercourse with an adulterous intention or a bad will (*quod aliquis cognoscat alienam intentione adulterandi sive ex improbitate voluntatis*). He can permit the act but not the bad will. That is why acts that are *secundum se* evil can never be good, for these acts by definition (*de ratione sui nominis*) include an inordinate intention.

Therefore, for Bonaventure, an act which is evil *secundum se* is one which by definition is opposed to God, either because it is directly against God himself (hatred of God) or because it is done *ex libidine or ex improba voluntate.*[74] These acts can never be justified under any circumstance or by any purpose. However these are not the material actions of theft, fornication, adultery and the like. Rather they are acts which by definition are sinful because they are connected with an evil will.

B. *The Case of Lying*

Although the medieval theologians commonly admitted that God could dispense from the precepts of the second tablet of the decalogue, there seems to have been some dispute about lying.[75]

Peter of Poitiers was consistent with the general doctrine which distinguished between the material act and its end. Explaining Jacob's assertion that he was Esau, Peter distinguishes between a false statement and a lie: "*Jacob dixit falsum sed non est mentitus.*" Jacob, he says, did not speak against his mind or conscience, because his conscience dictated that he obey the Holy Spirit. Real falseness is not found in a false statement but in departing from God by unfaithfulness.[76] St. Albert also seems to distinguish between a false statement and a lie. He explains that Jacob did not lie because he spoke under the inspiration of the Spirit. Jacob said what was false in so far as his speech did not conform to reality, but he spoke the truth in so far as his words referred to a mystery.[77]

[75] The principal issue discussed was the gravity of lying. Cf. Artur Landgraf, "Definition und Sündhaftigkeit der Lüge nach der Lehr der Frühscholastik," *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 63 (1939) 50-85.

[76] *Sententiarum Libri Quinque,* Lib. IV, c. 5, col. 1153-6.

[77] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, a. 9, sol.

Other authors avoided the issue, simply explaining that Jacob did not lie but spoke transumptively. He did not say that he was Esau personally but virtually, i. e., in respect to his birthright.[78]

The *Summa Fratris Alexandri*, however, takes another direction. The author quotes St. Augustine saying that, unlike theft and homicide, lying can never be good under any circumstance. He then gives two reasons for the difference. First, theft and homicide have an inordination in the matter but not in the end, whereas lying has an inordination in both the matter and the end. For lying includes an evil intention, namely the intention to deceive: as St. Augustine said, lying is the false significance of speech with the intention to deceive. Second, truth is more noble than money or life: no new good can be introduced which can compensate for a defect of truth.[79]

St. Bonaventure takes this teaching of the *Summa* to its logical conclusion. He says that it is of the essence of a lie to be sinful, so that it can never be made good by any reason, any purpose, or any dispensation from man or God.

Bonaventure's defense of this statement is taken from the first argument in the *Summa*.[80] A lie includes not only undue matter but a bad intention, the intention to deceive. By definition (*de ratione sui nominis*) lying includes an inordinate end. Therefore God cannot permit a man to speak with the intention to deceive any more than he can permit a man to have sexual intercourse with an adulterous intention or wicked will.

The equivocal meaning given here to *evil intention* is easy to see. A man who kills has the intention to deprive another of life; a man who steals has the intention to deprive another

[78] Cf. William of Auxerre (*Summa Aurea*, f. 217^{v}) and Hugh of St. Cher (*Cod. Vat. lat.* 1098, f. 123^{v}-124^{v}).

[79] *Summa Fratris Alexandri* II/2, #400, sol., ad 1, (403). Cf. III/2, #390, sol., (580).

[80] Bonaventure does not seem impressed with the second argument in the *Summa*. Without confronting it directly, he distinguishes between created and uncreated truth, and he argues that, as God is above created goodness, so also he is above created truth and so can authorize its destruction. (*In III Sent.*, d. 38. a. un., q. 2).

of property; a man who lies has the intention to deprive another of truth. But the critical question in determining whether God can authorize certain acts is not whether or not a man intends the material act and its natural effects. The critical question is whether or not the act is done *ex libidine*. To be consistent with the general doctrine of his age, St. Bonaventure should have said that God can make good the material act of lying but not lying done *ex libidine*.

Bonaventure, it seems, was intent upon defending the statement of Augustine and was quite aware of the weakness of his argument. For immediately after stating that a lie never can be made good by any reason, purpose or dispensation, he says that Augustine expressly holds this and many theologians agree, but it is difficult to defend it with reason: "*Et hoc Augustinus dicit expresse et nititur multipliciter probare; et in hoc communiter concordant doctores. Sed rationem huius difficile est assignare.*" [81]

III. St. Thomas Aquinas

A. *The General Doctrine*

In the first book of his *Commentary on the Sentences* St. Thomas says that God cannot dispense from the precepts of the first tablet of the decalogue which order men immediately to God but he can dispense from the precepts of the second tablet which order men immediately to other men. Sins which directly destroy the order of men to God, their ultimate end, (e. g. despair or hatred of God) never can be made good. But sins which destroy the order among creatures (e. g. killing an innocent person, fraternal hatred, disobedience to a superior) can be made licit by the quasi-miraculous operation of God. For, he argues, God established the order among creatures, and he can keep these sinful acts ordered to the ultimate end. If God removes the deordination in acts like killing an innocent person, these acts are in accord with natural law which dictates that we should do everything ordered and prescribed by God.[82]

[81] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, a. un., q. 2; dub. IV.
[82] *In I Sent.*, d. 47, q. 1, a. 4.

In the third book of his commentary Thomas says that dispensations from the precepts of the decalogue are impossible, because all the precepts of the decalogue contain the intention of the legislator.[83] But in his response to the objections he explains that God never commands actions contrary to the decalogue as such (*secundum quod ad Decalogum pertinent*). Thus he does not command theft, i. e. taking what one has no right to (*in quantum res furata aliena est ab accipiente*). However, for a good reason God and even human authority can transfer ownership (*rem quae unius fuerat alteri conferunt*), so that taking the property is not stealing.[84] Similarly, he says, God who can change nature can remove the condition of marriage which is required for sexual intercourse, so that the act of extramarital intercourse is not opposed to the decalogue.[85] Also, he says, the act of homicide is not necessarily opposed to the decalogue, since the decalogue does not forbid killing but killing a man who ought not be killed.[86]

In the fourth book of his commentary Thomas discusses polygamy and concubinage. Polygamy, he says, is opposed to one of the secondary precepts of natural law. The secondary precepts apply generally but not always. Since it is difficult to determine when such a precept applies and when it does not, dispensations can be given only by the authority who made the law. Hence only God can give a dispensation for the licit practice of polygamy.[87]

Concubinage, on the other hand, is opposed to one of the primary precepts of natural law, and primary precepts do not receive dispensations. Therefore, Thomas concludes, there never was a time when concubinage as such (*secundum se*) was permitted by dispensation.[88] However, in the next question Thomas modifies this statement about primary precepts. He

[83] *In III Sent.*, d. 37, a. 4.
[84] *In III* Sent., d. 37, a. 4, ad 3.
[85] *In III Sent.*, d. 37, a. 4, ad 4.
[86] *In III Sent.*, d. 37, a. 4, ad 5.
[87] *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 2, sol. (Cf. *Suppl.*, q. 65, a. 2).
[88] *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 3, sol. 3. (Cf. *Suppl.*, q. 65, a. 5).

explains that the secondary precepts of natural law oblige frequently but not always, whereas the primary precepts oblige always. The primary precepts are like the laws of physical nature which can be suspended only by a supernatural intervention, that is to say by a miracle. Therefore, Thomas says, a dispensation from the primary precepts of natural law also is possible, but it is comparable to a miracle in the physical order. An example of such a dispensation is the one given to Abraham from the law against killing an innocent person.[89] Another instance is the dispensation given to Hosea from the law against having a concubine.[90]

In *Quodlibet 8* Thomas says that homicide (*homicidium*) has an inordination inseparably joined to it and so is never licit. But, he explains, by *homicidium* he means more than killing a man (*occisio hominis*); he means the undue killing of a man (*occisionem hominis indebitam*).[91]

In his disputed question *De Potentia* he says again that for a good end God is able to command Abraham to kill an innocent person and Hosea to fornicate. For if God commands these actions, they are no longer mortal sins, because God can direct all things to his goodness and is the orderer of human generation.[92]

In his disputed question *De Malo* Thomas argues that the effect of God's command to Hosea was that an action which would have been sinful was not. His reason is the same as he gave in the first book of his *Commentary on the Sentences*: God can dispense from the precepts of the second tablet of the decalogue which order men to each other; but he canot dispense from the precepts of the first tablet which order men immedi-

[89] *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1. (Cf. *Suppl.*, q. 67, a. 2). *Contra Gentiles* III, 25.

[90] *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 2, a. 2, sol., 1, ad 2. (Cf. *Suppl.*, q. 67, a.2, ad 2). In this context the editors of the Marietti edition of the *Supplementum* remark that the senior Thomas revoked this teaching in I-II, q. 100, a. 8, asserting there that the primary precepts admit of no dispensation, not even by God. (Cf. Vol. III, p. 901, note 10). But, as we shall see, the senior Thomas did no such thing.

[91] *Quodlibet* 8, a. 14.

[92] *De Potentia*, q. 1, a. 6, ad 4.

ately to God, because God cannot deny himself.[93] Later in the same work he returns to the problems of the Jews despoiling the Egyptians and Hosea's fornication. Here he simply says that because of the supreme power and authority of God, an act which would have been theft was not theft and an act which would have been fornication was not fornication.[94]

In the *Summa Theologiae* Thomas again faces the problems of Abraham killing an innocent person, the Jews stealing from the Egyptians and Hosea fornicating with a prostitute. Here he explains that God can authorize the death of anyone, innocent or guilty, without any injustice. Also, sexual intercourse with any woman, if done under divine command, is not adultery or fornication; for adultery is sexual intercourse with someone else's wife who is so deputed by divine law. And stealing another's property under divine command is not theft; for theft implies that the owner is unwilling, and God is the owner of everything.[95]

Thomas then raises the question explicitly: are dispensations from the decalogue possible? He answers that dispensations from the precepts of the decalogue are not possible, because they contain the intention of the legislator. The precepts of the first tablet, which order men to God, contain the order to the common and final good of man which is God; and the precepts of the second tablet contain the order of justice among men, that is that everyone receive his due and nothing undue. Thus (*secundum hanc rationem*), Thomas says, the precepts of the decalogue are to be understood.[96]

In his response to the second objection Thomas further explains that, even though human authorities can dispense from human laws, God cannot dispense from the precepts of the decalogue. If God were to abolish the order of his justice, he would deny himself, since he himself is justice. Therefore even God's dispensation could not make it licit for a man not to be

[93] *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 1, ad 17.
[94] *De Malo*, q. 15, a. 1, ad 8.
[95] I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 2.
[96] I-II, q. 100, a. 8.

ordered to God or not to be subject to the order of God's justice among men.[97]

In his response to the first objection he again affirms that no dispensation is possible when the precepts of the decalogue are understood in this formal sense, that is in so far as they contain the order of justice itself. The order of justice, he says, always holds; justice always must be observed. However, he admits, the determined ways of observing justice may change, and here dispensations are possible.[98]

Thomas expands on this in his response to the third objection. The decalogue forbids killing a man insofar as killing is unjust (*secundum quod habet rationem indebiti: sic enim praeceptum continet ipsam rationem iustitiae*). Therefore it is forbidden to kill a man unjustly. But just killing (e. g. of malefactors or enemies of the State) is not the killing forbidden in the decalogue. In the same way the decalogue forbids stealing and robbery; that is to say, it forbids taking what is not due.

Accordingly, Thomas adds, when the Jews despoiled the Egyptians they did not steal, because the Egyptian treasure was due to them because of God's decision. When Abraham consented to kill his son he did not consent to murder, because he ought to have killed his son on account of God's command; for God is the author of life and death. And when Hosea went to the harlot he did not commit adultery or fornicate, because he acted under the command of God who is the author of marriage.

Therefore, he explains, the precepts of the decalogue are unchangeable in so far as they prescribe what is just (*quantum ad rationem iustitiae quam continent*). But the determination of what individual acts are in fact murder, stealing, and adultery can vary. Sometimes this determination can be made by human authority, that is in matters committed to the jurisdiction of men. And sometimes it can be made only by God, that is in those matters instituted by God alone, for instance in marriage.[99]

[97] I-II, q. 100, a. 8, ad 2. [98] I-II, q. 100, a. 8, ad 1. [99] I-II, q. 100, a. 8, ad 3.

In another place Thomas deals with this objection: some acts once named are joined to evil, for instance theft; but what is *secundum se* evil never can be done for any good end. In response he argues that extreme necessity makes another's property one's own; therefore taking this property in such circumstances does not fulfill the definition of theft (*non habet rationem furti, proprie loquendo*).[100]

Later on he explains that God cannot command any action which is contrary to a virtue but only to the usual way a virtue is practiced. Hence God's command to Abraham to kill his innocent son was not against justice, because God is the author of life and death. His command to the Jews to despoil the Egyptians was not against justice, because everything belongs to God and so he can give it to anyone he chooses. And his command to Hosea to fornicate was not against chastity, because God is the orderer of human generation, and the right way of using women is the way God establishes.[101]

Finally, in discussing fornication Thomas explains again that Hosea did not sin in fornicating under God's command. In fact, Hosea's intercourse with the harlot should not properly be called fornication, although generally speaking his action would be fornication. Similarly, Abraham did not sin in willing to kill his innocent son, because he was obeying God, even though considered in itself his action is commonly opposed to right reason. Fornication, he explains, is a sin insofar as it is against right reason. But human reason is right if it is regulated by the divine will which is the first and highest rule. Therefore, what a man does in obedience to God's will and command is not against right reason, although it may seem to be contrary to the common order of reason, just as a miracle is not against nature but against the common course of nature.[102]

B. *The Case of Lying*

Like a number of his predecessors St. Thomas is unwilling to

[100] II-II, q. 66, a. 7, ad 2.
[101] II-II, q. 104, a. 5, ad 2. Cf. II-II, q. 64, a. 6, ad 1.
[102] II-II, q. 154, a. 2, ad 2.

admit exceptions to the precept against lying. In his *Commentary on the Sentences* he quotes St. Augustine saying that every lie is a sin. In defense of this doctrine Thomas argues that, since speech is for the purpose of expressing one's mind, anyone who says what is not in his mind says what he ought not say. Since that is what occurs in every lie, every lie is a sin no matter how good the reason might be.[103]

Evil may not be done that good may come of it. As one may not steal to give an alms, so one may not lie for any advantage of one's neighbor, since a lie is inordinate of itself (*de se inordinationem habet*).[104]

Therefore the midwives in the Old Testament who saved the Jewish children by their lie were not excused from sin; they were praised only because of their concern for the children.[105] Jacob, on the other hand, did not lie: his words had a true meaning which was inspired by the Holy Spirit, namely that the birthright of Esau was his by divine election.[106]

Accordingly, Thomas argues that a woman who can preserve her chastity by lying should not lie but should trust that God will give her sufficient grace not to sin by consent. For, he says, if one admits with some authors that in such circumstances she should lie, then one has to concede that sometimes lying is not a sin—and that would be contrary to the teaching of Augustine.[107]

In *Quodlibet 8* Thomas again cites Augustine and argues that lying is always a sin because it has an inordination inseparably joined to it.[108] As murder (*occisionem hominis indebitam*) is always illicit, so is lying.[109] Accordingly Thomas explains the Old Testament texts in the same way as he did in his commentary.[110] In the *Summa Theologiae* Thomas repeats the

[103] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, a. 3.
[104] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, a. 3, ad 6.
[105] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, a. 3, ad 2.
[106] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, a. 3, ad 1.
[107] *In III Sent.*, d. 38, *expositio textus.*
[108] *Quodlibet* 8, a. 14.
[109] *Quodlibet* 8, a. 14, ad 1.
[110] *Quodlibet* 8, a. 14, ad 2.

same teaching. As Augustine said, every lie is a sin. It is an act in undue matter (*actus cadens super indebitam materiam*). Since words are naturally signs of thought, it is unnatural and undue that a man signify by word what he does not have in his mind. Hence a lie is *secundum se malum ex genere* and so in no way can be good or licit.[111] Lying is sinful because of its own inordination. As it is not licit to steal to give an alms, so it is not licit to lie in order to avoid harm.[112]

In accordance with this doctrine Thomas says that the midwives were not rewarded for lying but for their fear of God and their benevolence. Abraham did not lie when he said that Sara was his sister; he wanted to hide the truth, not to lie: he called Sara his sister because she was his brother's daughter. And Jacob did not lie; rather he said in a mystical way that he was Esau, Isaac's firstborn, since the birthright was his by right.[113]

Conclusion

St. Thomas's doctrine fits harmoniously into the context of his time. He was familiar with and used William of Auxerre's category of acts which are *secundum se* evil, things which *mox nominata sunt mala* and therefore never can become licit or good. He did not probe as deeply into the nature of these acts as did some of his predecessors who in their more leisurely analyses explained them as acts which are by definition sinful either because they are directly opposed to God or are done *ex libidine*. But following the teaching of Peter of Poitiers, William of Auxerre, William of Paris, Philip the Chancellor, Hugh of St. Cher, the *Summa Fratris Alexandri*, St. Albert and St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas clearly understands them in a formal not material sense.

As Peter of Poitiers and the *Summa Fratris Alexandri* had noted, what was absolutely forbidden by the decalogue was

[111] II-II, q. 110, a. 3.
[112] II-II, q. 110, a. 3, ad 4.
[113] II-II, q. 110, a. 3, ad 3.

not simply the material acts of homicide, sexual intercourse outside of marriage, or taking another's property, but rather the inordinate or unjust performance of these acts, so Thomas held that killing is not murder unless it is unjust, taking another's property is not theft unless it is against the will of God the owner of everything, and extramarital intercourse is not adultery or fornication unless it is against the will of God who orders human generation.

To the question whether dispensations from the precepts of the decalogue are possible St. Thomas took two approaches. One was to understand the decalogue as forbidding actions in this formal sense, that is as inordinate or unjust. This is the approach he took in the third book of his Sentence-Commentary (1254-6)[114] and in the *Prima Secundae* of his *Summa* (1269-70). Here he argued that dispensations from the precepts of the decalogue are not possible. No dispensation is possible from the precepts of the first tablet, because these order men directly to God their last end. And no dispensation is possible from the precepts of the second tablet, because these prescribe the order of justice among men, and God cannot go against justice because he himself is justice.

Several of Thomas's predecessors had taken this same tack. For instance, Peter of Poitiers argued that the precepts of the decalogue should be understood in a formal sense—Thou shalt not unjustly . . . — and in this sense God does not command against them. And the *Summa Fratris Alexandri* noted that the fifth commandment forbids inordinate killing as the sixth forbids inordinate coitus, and in this sense God does not dispense. But like all his predecessors Thomas admitted that God can authorize by dispensation the material actions (homicide,

[114] The exact dates of much of Thomas' writings are still uncertain. The dates listed by Walz for the works referred to in our study are fairly safe:—*Scriptum in IV libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi:* 1254-56 (Pelster, 1253-55); *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Lib. III: 1261-64; *Quaestiones quodlibetales* 7-11: 1265-67; *De Potentia:* 1265-67 (Mandonnet, 1269); *De Malo:* after 1269 (Mandonnet, 1263-68); *Prima Secundae:* 1269-70; *Secunda Secundae:* 1271-72. (Cf. A. Walz, O.P., *San Tommaso d'Aquino, Studi biografici sul Dottore Angelico,* Rome, 1945.).

adultery, stealing) forbidden in the second tablet of the decalogue. God cannot authorize injustice; but what material actions are in fact just or unjust remains to be decided. It is up to the competent authorities, Thomas said, to make this determination.

In the first book of his Sentence-Commentary (1254-6) and in one of his later works, his disputed question *de Malo* (1269-72), Thomas took another approach. Here he adopted the solution found in Alexander of Hales, the *Summa Fratris Alexandri* and St. Bonaventure. The precepts of the first tablet order men to God; the precepts of the second tablet order men to each other. God cannot dispense from the right order of men to himself without contradicting himself; but he can dispense from all the other precepts of the decalogue.

The junior Thomas used both approaches in his Sentence-Commentary, and the senior Thomas used both again in his later works, the *Prima Secundae* and *de Malo*. It is easy to understand how Thomas could move so easily between the two if one reads him in the context in which he was writing. The two responses are not inconsistent, and they do not represent a change of view. They are simply two ways that his predecessors had formulated the same answer to the question. If the precepts of the decalogue are understood in a formal sense as forbidding actions in so far as they are unjust or inordinate actions, then God cannot authorize them without contradicting himself. But he can command the same material actions, since in themselves as material acts they are not *secundum se* evil. That is the answer Thomas found in the whole tradition he was reading, and it is the answer he adopted in his own works.

Thomas did add to the discussion an analogy which we have not found in any of his predecessors. He compared God's dispensation from natural law precepts to a miracle in the physical order. But it is far from clear how this comparison throws any new light on the problem.

In the fourth book of his *Commentary on the Sentences* Thomas distinguished between the primary and secondary pre-

cepts of natural law: the primary precepts apply always, and the secondary precepts apply in most instances. Here he said that no dispensations are given from the primary precepts and therefore no dispensation was ever given for concubinage as such.[115] Then he modified this, saying that dispensations are given from the primary precepts but they are like a miracle in the physical order: only a supernatural intervention by God can account for it.[116] However, regarding the secondary precepts of natural law, Thomas also insisted that, since they come from God, only God can dispense from them: although they are more open to exceptions, the judgment about the exceptional case is so difficult to make that the decision is reserved to God.[117] Then Thomas also added that a dispensation from the secondary precepts is like a miracle in the physical order.[118]

Thomas's distinction between the primary and secondary precepts of natural law in his first work has been subject to frequent criticism because of his lack of clarity and coherence.[119] And Thomas never used it again in the same sense in any of his later writings.[120] In this context his comparison of a dispensation from natural law to a miracle in the physical order is also unenlightening. At least it appears to carry no special significance, affirming only what Thomas and his predecessors already said, namely that only God, not man, can dispense from the precepts of natural law.

Finally, it is clear from our study that the case of lying presented a special problem in the middle ages. St. Augustine

[115] *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 3, sol. 3. (Cf. *Suppl.* q. 65, a. 5).

[116] *In IV Sent*, d. 33, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1 and ad 2. (Cf. *Suppl.* q. 67, a. 2, c. and ad 2).

[117] *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 2, sol. (Cf. Suppl. q. 65, a. 2).

[118] *In IV Sent*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2. (Cf. *Suppl.*, q. 65, a. 2, ad 2).

[119] Cf. J. Maritain, *Man and the State*, p. 85; J. Fuchs, *Theologia Moralis Generalis I*, 83; O. Lottin, "La valeur des formules de saint Thomas d'Aquin concernant la loi naturelle," *Mélanges Joseph Maréchal*, II, pp. 351 ff; O. Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, II, i. p. 96, 11-47; J. Fuchs, *Die Sexualethik des heiligen Thomas von Aquin*, p. 177; J. Aubert, *Le droit romain dans l'oeuvre de saint Thomas*, p. 111.

[120] Cf. *S. Th. I-II*, q. 94, a. 4 and a. 5, where Thomas uses this language in another sense.

had defined lying as speaking against one's mind with the intention to deceive, and he said that every lie is sinful. The authority of Augustine was too great for theologians easily to challenge it.

Later theologians, including a number of the early twentieth century manualists, solved the problem by distinguishing a falsehood (*falsiloquium*) from a lie (*mendacium*). They maintained that lying is always sinful, but they defined lying in formal terms as denying the truth to one who has a right to it or as speaking against one's communicable mind.[121] This distinction between a false statement and a lie was already foreshadowed in the writings of Peter of Poitiers and St. Albert the Great, but it never took hold or was developed in the medieval tradition. This is ironic, because a distinction between lying as such and the material act would have been the most consistent application of the general doctrine of the time.

The medieval theologians taught that God could dispense from the precepts of the second tablet of the decalogue in so far as they proscribed the material acts of homicide, fornication, adultery, stealing and the like. Consistently they should have said the same about lying. But they generally preferred to follow Augustine by explaining away the lies of the holy men in the Old Testament as not lies at all but figures of speech. In this St. Thomas was no exception.

But it is interesting to observe the delicate balance Thomas kept. He never challenged the authority of St. Augustine, and he never said that God cannot dispense from the precept against lying. Bonaventure had not been so careful. Bonaventure drew the conclusion that not even God can dispense from the precept against lying. He attributed this doctrine to Augustine and tried as best he could to defend it, even though he admitted that an argument was difficult to make. St. Thomas, on the other hand, simply sidestepped the issue.

Thomas said that lying is like murder and stealing: it is *secundum se* evil and so never permitted for any reason. He also said that God can dispense from the precepts of the second

[121] Cf. S. Loiano, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis* III, pp. 506-517.

tablet of the decalogue, and he applied this doctrine to homicide, adultery, fornication, concubinage, stealing and the like. But he never explicitly applied it to lying. Rather he explained the lies of the holy men in the Old Testament in the same way that Augustine did. However, Thomas never went any further. He never said, as Bonaventure did, that lying cannot be made licit by divine dispensation. He simply never raised the question and so was not forced by the Augustinian texts, as Bonaventure was, to contradict or make an exception to his general doctrine and the doctrine of his age.

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OCKHAM'S EXTREME NOMINALISM

Introduction

WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, modern historians of philosophy find themselves in one of three camps regarding Ockham's epistemic and ontic status: those who assure us that he is a conceptualist;[1] those who assure us that he is what amounts to a moderate nominalist;[2] and those who, whether expressly or not, assure us that they are not sure whether he is a conceptualist or moderate nominalist.[3] In part, such diversity and ambivalence of opinion is attributable to the widespread confusion which still haunts the nominalist-conceptualist distinction.[4] But as I see it, the single

[1] Some historians who cast Ockham in a conceptualist mold are: Paul J. Glenn, *Criteriology* (St. Louis, Missouri, 1933), p. 221; Josephus Gredt, O. S. B., *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, I (Barcinone, 1961), p. 109, n. 114, 2; Henri Grenier, *Thomistic Philosophy*, II: *Metaphysics*, trans. J. P. E. O'Hanley (Charlottetown, Canada, 1948), p. 139; William Turner, *History of Philosophy* (Boston, 1903), p. 405; Julius Weinberg, *A Short History of Medieval Philosophy* (New Jersey, 1964), p. 245; Maurice de Wulf, *History of Mediaeval Philosophy*, I, trans. Ernest C. Messenger (New York, 1952), p. 138.

[2] Historians who favor a moderate nominalist interpretation include: Emile Bréhier, *The Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, trans. Wade Baskin (Chicago and London, 1965), p. 194; Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto, 1952), p. 48; Robert Guelluy, *Philosophie et Théologie chez Guillaume d'Ockham* (Louvain et Paris, 1947), p. 313, *passim*; Armand A. Maurer, C. S. B., *Medieval Philosophy* (New York, 1962), p. 268, *passim*; Paul Vignaux, "Nominalisme," *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, XI (Paris, 1931); Wilhelm Windelband, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, I (New York, 1958). p. 315.

[3] For instance, see: R. P. Phillips, *Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, II: *Metaphysics* (London, 1935), pp. 87-88, 90; Richard McKeon, *Selections From Medieval Philosophers*, II (New York, 1930), pp. 352, 424; Frederick Copleston, S. J., *A History of Philosophy*, III: *Late Mediaeval and Renaissance Philosophy*, Part 1: *Ockham to the Speculative Mystics* (New York, 1963), pp. 67, 69; T. V. Smith, ed., *Philosophers Speak For Themselves* (Chicago, 1934), p. 777.

[4] Conceptualism lends itself to easy equation with moderate nominalism. The equation is understandable perhaps, but, upon analysis, unwarranted. For although

most significant reason historians differ and even demur when it comes to classifying Ockham can be traced to the ambiguity inherent in his theory of universals—an opinion I shall be at pains to corroborate later in the article.

For now, I wish simply to mention what I take to be a remarkable consequence of Ockham's equivocal views on universality. This consequence is my suspicion that historians have almost universally misjudged his rightful epistemic niche. As far as I can determine, only two modern historians of philosophy approximate what I consider the veridical estimate of Ockham's theory of universals, short of explicitly labeling his theory as such.[5] So let me explicitly suggest that, in the final rendering, Ockham's theory of universals amounts to a reluctant but for all that no less real version of extreme nominalism.

Moreover, in holding this opinion, I believe I am actually bringing to logical completion the conclusions of certainly the most energetic supporter of Ockham in recent times, the late Franciscan friar, Fr. Philotheus Boehner. According to Fr. Boehner, Ockham's epistemic theory is a species neither of classical (extreme) nominalism,[6] nor of classical ("idealistic")

conceptualism, like moderate nominalism, disclaims any extramental fundament of universality, quite unlike moderate nominalism, conceptualism regards the significance of universal terms as the product of universal concepts (e. g., Kant), whereas moderate nominalism regards the same as the product of mental and/or linguistic devices which merely *function* as universals (e. g., Hume's image-epistemology). Moreover, concerning conceptualism's distinctive appeal to mental universals as the ground of meaningful terms, two points should be made. First, and in my opinion, conceptualism must accord an objective, necessary and non-arbitrary dignity to its concepts, or else relegate its distinction from moderate nominalism to mere triviality, since, of course, moderate nominalism does not uphold the objective character of its functional universals. Second—and as I shall soon be arguing—with the possible exception of Kant, even where conceptualism does accord an objective status to mental universals, in the final analysis, such an epistemic and ontic persuasion reduces to a species of extreme nominalism, which grants only a verbal and hence arbitrary, dignity to universals.

[5] See Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York, 1937), pp. 67-73; W. T. Jones, *The Medieval Mind* (New York, 1969), pp. 320-321.

[6] See Philotheus Boehner, O. F. M., *Collected Articles on Ockham*, ed. Eligius M. Buytaeret, O. F. M. (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1958), p. 318.

conceptualism.[7] New discoveries in Ockhamist research reveal, he maintains, that Ockham's theory of universals is in truth situated somewhere in between moderate realism and idealistic conceptualism. To designate this middle-ground theory, Fr. Boehner has coined the term " realistic conceptualism." [8]

In Fr. Boehner's estimation, what makes Ockham's theory of universals a form of conceptualism is the fact that " The *universale in re*, even as a common nature, or in any other form which entails any real existence of the universal in individuals, is eliminated on metaphysical grounds." [9] But, he continues, what qualifies Ockham as a realist is the equally compelling fact that he upholds the " natural," " immediate " and " necessary " derivation of universal concepts from the empirical knowledge of singulars via "abstraction." This being the case, it follows (1) that " The content of our concepts is the conception or grasping of reality," and, insofar as what our concepts express is founded in the real order, that (2) " The content of our thought is in the relation of similitude with reality." [10]

I wish to concede that, in my opinion, Fr. Boehner's appraisal of Ockham's epistemic theory is sound. I would hasten to qualify my concession, however, by adding that it is sound only insofar as it articulates Ockham's *true intent* vis-a-vis universality. In other words, I agree that ' realistic conceptualism ' is an apt designation of Ockham's desired epistemic program; I am not ready to grant that he succeeded in dialectically defending or carrying through that intended program.

More pointedly, and as I shall soon be arguing in greater detail, I submit that Ockham's problems stem from his radical and uncompromising commitment to extramental individuality. Committed as he is to particularity, he allows himself no extra-

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 159.
[8] *Ibid,* p. 163.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 158.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 159-161.

mental foothold for the relation of similitude which he claims derives, at least initially, from the mind's contact with reality. Thus bereft of any real, objective basis of similarity, he lacks a reason or fundament in things for universal ideas. Finally, without an objective basis, universals are relegated to arbitrariness and subjectivity. In short, and in the final analysis, Ockham's program of realistic conceptualism finds itself to be ontologically all of a piece with extreme nominalism, differing from the latter by no more than a tenuous verbal distinction.

Towards corroborating these contentions, I shall, first, detail Ockham's misgivings with extramental commonality; after this, I shall proceed to set forth his own positive solution to the problem of universals, concluding in the last section with an evaluation as limned in the preceding paragraph.

Against Extramental Universality [11]

A. *Critique of Platonism*

Against the platonic view that a universal is a thing or substance that is numerically one, Ockham advances the following objections. If a universal were a singular substance, this would entail the absurd consequence that Socrates is a universal, since, by reducing universality to the level of singular substance, there is no greater reason (*non major ratio est*) to accord universality to one singular substance than to another. It follows, therefore, that no singular substance is a universal-thing, but that every substance is numerically one and singular.

This conclusion can be established also as follows. Every substance is either one thing (*una res*) or many things (*plures res*). If one thing, it is either many singular things, or many universal things. On the former hypothesis, a substance would

[11] Two important presuppositions underlie Ockham's critique of extramental universality: first, that the ontological order is subject to the logical; second, and as a corollary to the first, that all distinction involves non-identity, and inversely, that all indistinction implies identity. See Paul Vignaux, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: an Introduction*, trans. E. C. Hall (Cleveland and New York, 1959), pp. 170-171.

be composed of many singular substances, so that it would be legitimate to say that a substance is many particular men. But this view offers no relief to proponents of the thing-status of universals, for " although a universal would be distinguished from one particular thing, it would yet not be distinguished from particular things."

Should we opt for the view that a substance is many universal things, we may isolate one of these universal things, and ask whether it is one thing, or many? If one, it follows that it is a singular thing, and hence numerically one. If many, we are again driven to ask: is it many singular things, or many universal things? The former alternative has already been dispensed with. Therefore, the latter alternative must obtain. But on this hypothesis our only recourse is to isolate again one of these universals, and repeat the question: is it one thing, or many? "And thus either this will go on *in infinitum*, or we must take the stand that no substance is universal in such a way that it is not singular." [12]

Moreover, to assert that a universal substance exists in singular substances and yet is really distinct from them is to maintain that it can subsist apart from them. This means that God could, if he so desired, create ' Universal Man ' without creating individual men, or could create individual men without creating ' Universal Man '—surely an absurd proposition.

Should we elect to fly in the face of absurdity and allow that ' Universal Man ' is really distinct from individual men, even odder consequences ensue (at least as far as Christian theology is concerned). The first of these is that God could not create any individual, since on this view an individual " would not get its entire being from nothing (*non totum caperet esse de nihilo*), if the universal in it has existed before in another in-

[12] William of Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Philotheus Boehner, O. F. M. (Indianapolis, 1964), p. 38. The Latin inserts are from the critical edition of the above translation, namely, William Ockham, *Summa Logicae*, I, Ch. 15, ed. Philotheus Boehner, O. F. M. Henceforth all references to *Summa Logicae* cited *SL*; references to Boehner's English translation of same in *Philosophical Writings* cited *PW*.

dividual." The second consequence is the contrary of the first. It states that if God cannot create any individual *de novo*, neither can he annihilate anyone without annihilating everyone. To annihilate one individual, God must destroy that individual's universal essence in its entirety. But if all partake of the same universal essence, in annihilating one individual, God would of necessity be anihilating all individuals, " since they cannot remain without a part of themselves, such as the universal is held to be." [13]

Finally, there is this quandary. If, as claimed, a universal is of the essence of an individual, it must needs be that an individual is composed of universals, e. g., ' man ', ' animal ', etc. But to be an individual is to be singular, that is, a non-universal. Hence, if universals compose the essence of an individual, we find ourselves burdened with this contradiction: that the individual is at one and the same time singular and universal.[14] For these and like reasons, Ockham concludes that platonism is logically unacceptable.

B. *Critique of Medieval Realism*

The second version of the thing-status of the universal was held by many scholastics, and came to be known as " medieval realism." According to this view, the universal is not numerically one, as the platonists think, but is rather as numerically plentiful as the individuals whose essences they are. In other words, in the medieval version, there are as many universals as there are concrete individuals to house them.

Ockham was as unimpressed with this " house version " of universals as he was with the strictly platonic version. Like classical platonism, medieval realism faces the peculiar consequence that if the universal is really distinct from the individual (*realiter distincta ab individua*), there is no contradiction in holding that each can exist without the other. Wherefore, the

[13] *PW*, pp. 38-39; *SL*, I, Ch. 15, p. 46.
[14] *PW*, p. 39; *SL*, I, Ch. 15, pp. 46-47.

absurdity: that the individual can exist devoid of its universal essence, and vice versa.[15]

Again, between the whole and the part there is always a proportion. Now, if the whole in question is singular, each of its parts is proportionally singular. Accordingly, to contend that a singular is composed of universals is in actuality to claim that the parts are greater than the whole—an evident contradiction.[16]

Last but by no means least, between a universal nature, say, humanity, and its individuating principle (*differentia contrahens*),[17] there is a real distinction. Thus, humanity and individuating principle are two really distinct things (*duae res realiter distinctae*). For, they are either things, or no things. They cannot be no things; hence they are veritable things (*res*). Now, two things cannot be really distinct unless each is numerically one (*nisi utraque sit una numero*). It follows, then, that if humanity is really distinct from its individuating principle, humanity must needs be numerically one, and therefore numerically distinct (*numeraliter distincta*). But if humanity is numerically one through itself (*per se ipsam*), it is altogether otiose to posit an individuating principle as ground of numerical unity. Thus, humanity is singular through itself, independently of any individuating principle.[18]

[15] Guillelmi De Ockham, *Opera Philosophica et Theologica*, II: *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum, Ordinatio*, ed. Stephanus Brown, O. F. M. (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1970), d. 2, q. 5, p. 159. Note: the above is the most recent critical edition of Ockham's four-book *Commentary on the Sentences*. Fr. Boehner designates the first of these books "Ordinatio Ockham," the remaining three "Reportatio Ockham." In so designating these books, Fr. Boehner follows the practice of Ockham's time of indicating whether given books were destined for publication by the author, in which case they were termed "Ordinatio," or were copies of "lectures taken by a pupil at school and often worked over later by him or by the teacher. . . ." in which event they were styled "Reportatio." See Philotheus Boehner, "The Text Tradition of Ockham's Ordinatio," *The New Scholasticism*, XVI, 3 (1942), p. 205. Henceforth all citations of Book I of this edition of the *Commentary* will be designated *Ordinatio*.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 158-159.

[17] That is, a principle whereby Socrates *qua* individual man differs from Hegel *qua* individual man.

[18] *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 5, p. 155.

So, just as platonism failed to establish the substantive status of universals, we now find its medieval counterpart equally untenable. There seems, then, to be no other alternative but to admit that " no substance is universal," and, conversely, that " universals are in no way substances." [19]

C. *Critique of Duns Scotus's Theory of Universals*

In his desire to debunk all forms of extramental commonality, Ockham still had two ostensibly non-platonic views with which to contend. He himself introduces the first of these:

> Although it is clear to many that a universal is not a substance existing outside the mind in individuals and really distinct from them, still some are of the opinion that a universal does in some manner exist outside the mind in individuals, although not really but only formally distinct from them.[20]

The author of this opinion, Ockham tells us, is " the Subtle Doctor, who excelled the others in exactitude of judgment," [21] Duns Scotus. Concisely put, Scotus's theory of universals is this:

> In Socrates there is human nature, which is 'contracted to' Socrates by an individual difference [22] which is not really but formally distinct (*distinctum formaliter*) from this nature. Hence the nature and the individual difference are not two things, although the one is not formally the other.[23]

Via his formal distinction, Scotus was endeavoring to found universals in the real (*ex natura rei*),[24] without having to resort to the logically outrageous thing-theory of the platonists and their medieval counterparts. He concluded that the universal

[19] *PW*, pp. 38, 40; *SL*, I, Ch. 15, pp. 46, 48.

[20] *PW*, p. 40; *SL*, I, Ch. 16, p. 49.

[21] *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 6, p. 161.

[22] Which Scotus terms " haecceitas," that is, " thisness."

[23] *PW*, p. 40; SL, I, Ch. 16, p. 49. For a more technical analysis of Scotus's " formal distinction " see Efrem Bettoni, O. F. M., *Duns Scotus: the Basic Principles of His Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Bernardine Bonansea, O. F. M. (Washington, D. C., 1961), pp. 53-65.

[24] *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 3, p. 78.

nature and its individuating difference exist in an individual, not as two separable entities, but rather as two "formally" distinct aspects of the same numerical entity. Moreover, because they are only formally distinct, it is impossible, even through divine intervention, for one aspect to exist in numerical separability from the other.[25]

Notwithstanding Scotus's acclaimed exactitude and subtlety, Ockham found his formal distinction remarkably rife with logical perplexities, the most telling of which are the following. To begin with, if there is a distinction between this numerical nature and that individuating difference, it is necessary that they be really distinct things (*oportet quod sint res realiter distinctae*). This assertion Ockham purports to prove as follows: This universal nature is not formally distinct from itself; but this individuating difference is formally distinct from this universal nature. Therefore, this individuating difference is not this universal nature, that is to say, they are not the same thing. Whereupon, Ockham's contention that "In creatures no extramental distinction of any kind is possible except where [really] distinct things exist."

Furthermore, according to the Scotists, the individuating difference is the proper aspect, whereas the universal nature is the common. Accordingly, the individuating difference is not the universal nature. Therefore, the universal nature is not the same thing as the individuating difference, that is, "the same thing is not common and proper." In a similar vein, it is a logical truism that "opposites cannot belong to the same created thing." Now "common" and "proper" are opposites. Consequently, if the individuating difference and the universal nature were the same thing, it would follow that the same thing is at once common and proper.

Again, if the universal nature were the same as the individuating difference, the universal natures would be as numerous as the individuating differences, with the result that the uni-

[25] See Jones, *Medieval Mind*, pp. 302-304, 310-311; and Weinberg, *Short History of Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 246-247.

versal nature would not be common, " but each one would be proper to the difference with which it is really identical." [26] Nor is it any more difficult to prove the exact opposite, namely, that the individual difference is the universal nature. For, if the universal nature is not formally distinct from itself, then the individuating difference either is not the universal nature or it is. If it is not, it is numerically distinct. If it is, it is numerically united to the universal nature, in which case they are the same or identical. Hence, the individuating difference is the universal nature.[27]

We have no alternative, then, but to concede " that in creatures there is no such formal distinction; but whatever in creatures is distinct, is really distinct, and constitutes a distinct thing, if each of the two things distinguished is truly a thing." In short, if " contradiction is the most powerful way to prove a distinction of things " (*contradictio est via potissima ad probandum distinctionem rerum*), and if in the finite order it is impossible to gainsay " the validity of such modes of arguing as ' This is A, this is B, consequently a B is A' [principle of identity], or ' This is not A, this is B, consequently a B is not A' [principle of contradiction]," it must be the case that in the finite order " whenever contradictory predicates are true of certain things [e. g., " common " and " proper "], we must not deny that the things are [really] distinct. . . ." [28]

D. *Critique of the " Distinction of Reason "*

The second and final purportedly non-platonic effort to found universals in the real is represented by what Ockham designates the " distinction of reason " (*secundum rationem vel per con-*

[26] *PW*, pp. 40-41; *SL*, I, Ch. 16, pp. 49-50.

[27] This argument, though not expressly Ockham's, is a distillation of his critical remarks in *SL*, I, Ch. 16, pp. 50-51, nos. 52-69. See *PW*, pp. 42-43. In critical summary, Guelluy remarks that " La thèse de Scot consiste à sacrificer simultanément l'unité de l'universel et cette du singulier," and in the end recapitulating all the problems wrought by platonism and its medieval counterpart. *Philosophie et Théologie chez Ockham*, p. 338.

[28] *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 6, p. 174. See also *PW*, p. 43; *SL*, I, Ch. 16, p. 51.

sideration em intellectus).[29] In this view, universals possess no actual or substantive being outside the mind; only individuals exist as such. Nevertheless, if universals are not *actually* present in individuals, this is not to deny them some "reality" in the nature of things. As the proponents of the distinction of reason put it, universals are in fact "potentially and incompletely real in an individual" (*in potentia et incomplete, est realiter in individuo*), and as such admit of actualizing consideration by the intellect.[30]

Ockham found this position no more congenial than the three previous ones. If anything, such a view serves to highlight the fundamental problem of any attempt to locate universality—

[29] *Ibid.*, q. 8, p. 226.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 225-226, 229. Ockham also summarizes three specific versions of this theory. See *Ordinatio*, d. 2 q. 7, pp. 226-228. Note: It should be mentioned that the doctrine Ockham here summarizes under the heading, "Distinction of Reason," is roughly equivalent to the "moderate realist" theory of universals, as first articulated by Aristotle and later developed by Thomas Aquinas. In general, four major propositions mark the moderate realist theory of universals. The first is that only spatio-temporal individuals actually exist outside the mind (see Aristotle, *De Anima*, III, Ch. 8). The second is that, despite the particular nature of the extramental order, particular beings nevertheless "have common characteristics or traits, in virtue of which they belong to classes or kinds" (see Mortimer J. Adler, *The Difference of Man and the Difference It Makes*, New York, 1967, p. 347). The third proposition is that universals enjoy *potential* (not actual) existence in things insofar as they possess common properties (see Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, Ch. 77). The final proposition is that, given the potential status of universals in things, universals achieve actuality by an operation of the intellect, "abstraction," whereby the intellect selects and draws away from spatio-temporally bound things the requisite universal traits (see Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 79, a. 3).

Ockham's designation of this theory of universals as the "Distinction of Reason" is historically inaccurate. In point of historical fact, a distinction of reason designates a distinction which exists solely in the conceptual order. When applied specifically to the question of universals, this would relegate universality to a purely mental status, and negate any reality to universals outside the mind. As was seen, however, moderate realists do accord a certain extramental reality to universals, namely, potential universality. For this reason, a more appropriate, albeit not terribly precise, label for the moderate theory of universals would be the "Real Distinction," which designates an extramental distinction independent of and therefore discoverable by the mind. For more on the "real distinction," see note 88.

including " potential " universality—in singular things: to wit, in principle, singularity is irremediably opposed to commonality. A singular is that which is *not* predicable of many subjects (*singularis non est predicabilis de pluribus*); whereas a universal is that which *is* predicable of many subjects (*universale est predicabile de pluribus*). But, as is evident, to be predicable of many and not to be predicable of many are contradictories. So that to claim that a singular is or can be a universal is to claim the impossible.

Someone will surely counter that, according to the distinction of reason, a singular thing has only the possibility (*posse*) of universality, and hence is not predicable of many, save by an act of the intellect (*non predicatur de pluribus nisi per actum intellectus componentis*). But this precision avails for nought, retorts Ockham. To suggest that the singular possesses only the possibility of being predicated of many (*posse predicari de pluribus*) is to forget that the very nature of the singular is precisely the *non*-possibility of being predicated of many (*non posse predicari de pluribus*). But between *posse* and *non posse* contradictory oppositions obtains. Therefore, only under pain of contradiction may one pretend that the singular is the universal, even *in posse*.[31]

Conclusion: Radical Individuality of the External World

Whether we accept Ockham's critique of extramental universality in part, *in toto*, or not at all, there can be no doubt but that he himself considered it definitive. Implicit in his critique is the presupposition that the real order is subject to the logical. Thus, as he could find no logical warrant for positing the *universale in re*, he had little difficulty in concluding to the lack of any universal fundament outside the

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 236-237. Apropos of this critique, Vignaux writes: " Plus radicale en un sens que la critique de la distinction formelle . . . la critique de la distinction de raison semble bouleverser la conception traditionnelle de l'intellect apte par nature á diviser ce qu'unit l'être." In a word, Ockham herein lays waste the traditional notion of abstraction. *Nominalisme Au XIVe Siècle* (Montréal et Paris, 1948), p. 82. See in this respect *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 3, pp. 75-79.

mind, including the so-called "potentially" universal fundament.[32]

I say . . . therefore . . . that no extramental thing, whether this thing be taken as substance, or as partaking of some real or rational increment, or in whatever manner it might be considered or construed, is a universal. So that it is as impossible that some thing resident outside the mind be in some manner universal—save perhaps by convention, just as this expression 'man,' which is a singular expression, is a universal—as it is that a man, through whatever consideration or according to whatever being, be a donkey.[33]

With every last vestige of commonality stripped from the non-mental realm, let us admit that "every thing existing outside the soul is simply singular" (*omnis res extra animam est simpliciter singularis*).[34] In a word, the world which Ockham spreads before us will brook nothing save radically individual things; anything else simply is not, is not a thing.[35]

[32] Ockham makes the same point when discussing the notion of relation (*relatio*). As he sees it, relation does not denote any resembling features existing in and among nonmental things. To believe in the extramental existence of relations is to reify that which is by definition *relative to* existing subjects (*res*), and thus entails the contradictory assertion that a relation is at once relative *qua* relation and absolute *qua* subject. In the final analysis, "a relation . . . is nothing more than a name naturally apt to give rise to a mental proposition, vocal or written" (*Relatio est . . . solum nomen, ex quo nata est propositio mentalis, vocalis vel scripta componi*). *SL*, I, Ch. 49, pp. 140-144, esp. p. 142. Also see *SL*, I, Ch. 50, pp. 144-147.

[33] This is my rendering of the following: "Ideo . . . dico . . . quod nulla res extra animam, nec per se nec per aliquid additum, reale vel rationis, nec qualitercumque consideretur vel intelligatur, est universalis, ita quod tanta est impossibilitas quod aliqua res extra animam sit quocumque modo universalis—nisi forte per institutionem voluntariam, quomodo ista vox 'homo,' quae est vox singularis, est universalis—quanta impossibilitas est quod homo per quamcumque considerationem vel secundum quodcumque esse sit asinus." *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 8, pp. 248-249. See also *Ibid.*, p. 250: "Dico igitur quod per nullam considerationem vel intentionem potest rei aliquid competere nisi denominatione tantum extrinsica. . . ."; and *Ibid.*, p. 252: "Dico quod universale non est in re ipsa cui est universale nec realiter nec subjective, non plus quam haec vox 'homo', quae est una vera qualitas est in Sorte vel in illo quod significat. Nec universale est pars singularis respectu cuius est universale, non plus quam vox est pars significati."

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[35] According to Ernest A. Moody [*The Logic of William of Ockham* (New York, 1935), pp. 50-52, 61] and Paul Vignaux [*Nominalisme Au XIVe Siècle*, pp. 73-78], that

Theory of Universals

Having banished universals from the realm of extramentality, Ockham had no choice but to search within the mental realm for a viable base of universality. As such, two possibilities were open to him: he could either identify universals with words, or else relegate them to concepts. The Philosopher wasted little time and even less ink in disposing of the verbal, Roscellinian alternative, according to which nothing is universal of its very nature (*nihil est universale ex natura sua*), but is so rather by fiat, by sheer convention (*tantum ex institutione voluntaria*). To him, the most compelling reason for rejecting this view is the obvious fact that it paves the way for chaos. If nothing were naturally universal, what is to prevent someone from investing, say, even extramental substances with universality, since on the verbal hypothesis, one thing or group of things is as likely a candidate as any other thing or group of things?[36]

However, despite the fatuous character of the verbal alternative, its rejection does serve to emphasize one paramount truth apropos of universality: that an indispensable condition of any genuine theory of universals is some natural and nonarbitrary base of operation. With this we gain a clue to the true nature of the universal. In Ockham's view, to be a universal concept[37] is precisely to be a natural and nonarbitrary

Ockham opted for the radical individuality of the nonmental order was not merely the result of dispassionate logical inquiry. His more "passionate" motive was to safeguard the individual's unity, which, he maintained, was jeopardized by any intrusion of universality in the real. Moreover, in defending the individuality of the individual, Ockham purported to be defending the individualistic principles of Aristotle, and thus to be in actuality a neo-Aristotelian (see, for instance, Ockham's "Prologue" to the *Expositio super viii libros Physicorum*, in *PW*, pp. 3-4, 12-13; *SL*, I, Ch. 15, p. 47; *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 7, pp. 252-253). However, as Gilson remarks, there is more to being an Aristotelian than simply defending the fact "that nothing exists except that which is individual. . . .[F]or if Ockham was an Aristotelian, and St. Thomas an Aristotelian, and perhaps even Aristotle an Aristotelian, this at least remains to be explained: how is it that Ockham's ultimate conclusions are so completely destructive of those of Aristotle as well as those of St. Thomas Aquinas?" *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, pp. 63-64.

[36] *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 8, p. 271.

[37] It may seem redundant to speak of a *universal* concept, but such a qualification is necessitated by the fact that Ockham also refers to a singular concept,

relation to many things. Hence his important conclusion that, properly speaking, " a universal is nothing other than a concept of the mind " (*Tale universale non est nisi intentio animae*).[38]

But we are getting ahead of ourselves, or rather ahead of Ockham. After all, he does not simply assert the aforesaid conclusion; in truth, it is the outcome of a brilliant and intricate dialectic on his part. It is only fair, therefore, that, in the balance of this section, we investigate his reasons in support of his theory of universals. To this end, I shall begin by considering his views on the nature of the universal concept, and then his reply to two objections which might be levelled against his conceptual theory.

Nature of the Universal Concept

Mention was already made of Ockham's opinion that it is of the nature of the universal concept to be a natural relation to many things. Now he reveals further that the secret of the concept's relationship to things lies in its function as a universal sign.[39] A concept, whether particular or universal, is nothing other than " a mental quality " (*qualitas mentis*),[40] which " naturally signifies whatever it signifies " (*conceptus sive passio animae naturaliter significat quidquid significat*).[41] In a negative sense, this means that the conceptual sign is not merely the product of human will and institution—is not, in other words, a species of " conventional sign " (*signum volun-*

by which he understands an intellective cognition of a particular fact or thing, which abstracts from said thing's or event's existence or nonexistence. See Prologue to the *Ordinatio*, q. 1, n. sqq., in *PW*, pp. 25-26; Boehner, *Collected Articles*, p. 216.

[38] *SL*, I, Ch. 14, p. 45. Besides " intentio animae," other terms sometimes employed by Ockham to designate the concept are the following: " conceptus animae," " passio animae," " similitudo rei," and " intellectus." *SL*, I, Ch. 1, p. 9.

[39] Ockham includes under the notion of sign " everything which, when apprehended, makes something different from itself, which is already habitually known, actually known." This is Boehner's translation (in *Collected Articles*, p. 202) of the following: " Signum accipitur . . . pro omni illo quod apprehensum aliquid aliud in cognitionem facit venire, quamvis non faciat mentem venire in primam cognitionem eius . . . sed in actualem post habitualem eiusdem." *SL*, I, Ch. 1, p. 9.

[40] *SL*, I, Ch. 14, p. 44.

[41] *Ibid.*, Ch. 1, p. 9.

taria institutum).[42] Positively, and more importantly, it indicates that the universal concept is naturally significative insofar as its relation to things is that of "a sign naturally predicable of many things, in much the same way as smoke naturally signifies fire, or a groan the pain of a sick man, or laughter an inner joy" (*naturaliter est signum predicabile de pluribus, ad modum proportionaliter, quo fumus naturaliter significat ignem et gemitus infirmi dolorem et risus interiorem laetitiam*).[43] Moreover, it is important to note, says Ockham, that the concept's significative function is not only natural but "immediate" as well. That is, the concept requires no mediating, secondary factors to gain contact with things, but is itself the spontaneous and irreducible ground of things' meanings.[44]

To appreciate more fully the extent to which Ockham understands the immediate character of the concept, it will prove helpful to mention his views on the reality or being of the concept. Thanks to the painstaking research of Philotheus Boehner,[45] we know that in Ockham's earlier writings [46] he regarded three theories as equally plausible: (1) The concept is a "mental fiction" (*fictum in mente*). In this view, a concept possesses neither real [47] nor fictitious being. Rather, its being is solely that of a "thought-object" (*esse objectivum*) or mental product which can be called universal because of its objective

[42] *Ibid.*, Ch. 14, p. 45.

[43] *PW*, p. 37; *SL*, I, Ch. 14, p. 45. Elsewhere /*Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 8, p. 290/, Ockham explains that "It seems no more inappropriate to be able to elicit some qualities in the understanding which are naturally significative of things, than for brute animals and men to emit certain sounds to which it naturally belongs to signify other things" (*Nec videtur hoc magis inconveniens in intellectu posse elicere aliquas qualitates, quae sunt naturaliter signa rerum, quam (quod) bruta animalia et homines aliquos sonos naturaliter emittunt, quibus naturaliter competit aliqua alia significare*).

[44] *SL*, I, Ch. 1, p. 9. See Moody, *Logic of William of Ockham*, p. 83.

[45] See *Collected Articles*, pp. 169-174.

[46] See, for example, *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 8, p. 291: "Quamlibet istarum trium opinionum reputo probabilem; sed quae earum sit verior, relinquo judicio aliorum."

[47] "Real being" has reference to Aristotle's ten categories, especially substance and quality. See Aristotle's *Categories*, Ch. 4.

similitude to extramental things.[48] (2) The concept is a real being (*esse subjectivum*), that is, a quality of the mind (*qualitas mentis*), existing in the soul as in a subject. According to this theory, the concept is a natural likeness of extramental things, but one that is both other than and posterior to the act of knowing itself (*ista qualitas esset aliquid aliud ab intellectione et posterius ipsa intellectione*).[49] (3) The concept is a real quality existing subjectively in the soul, but, in contrast to the second theory, is itself identical to the act of understanding (*qualitas existens subjective in anima esset ipsamet intellectio*).[50] In other words, the act of understanding as such *is* the likeness of the object known, for which reason any appeal to mediatory mental contents which are other than and posterior to this act is either rejected or else considered otiose.

In his later writings, Ockham indicated a decided preference for the last of these theories, and for two principal reasons. First, in keeping with his love of parsimonious explanations,[51] he concluded that since the act of understanding functions perfectly well as a natural sign of external things, why posit more complicated conceptual mechanisms, which serve no effective purpose beyond that of the act of understanding itself?[52] The second and by far more significant reason, however, relates to the fact that Ockham soon realized the amenability of the third theory to his overall system of thought, and in particular to his theory of universals. By viewing the reality of the concept as identical to the act of understanding, he achieved a theo-

[48] *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 8, pp. 271-272.

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 291.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 291.

[51] See Boehner's remarks on the true meaning of "Ockham's Razor," in *PW*, p. xx, fn. 2.

[52] *SL*, I, Ch. 12, p. 39: "Et pro istis est ratio ista, quia frustra fit per plura, quod potest fieri per pauciora. Omnia autem, quae salvantur ponendo aliquid distinctum ab actu intelligendi, possunt salvari sine tali distinctione, eo quod supponere pro alio et significare aliud ita potest competere actui intelligendi sicut alii signo. Igitur praeter actum intelligendi non opportet aliquid aliud ponere." See also *The Seven Quodlibeta: Quodlibet* IV, q. XIX, in *Selections From Medieval Philosophers*, II, ed. Richard McKeon (New York, 1930), p. 390.

retical framework wherein he could adequately express the natural, immediate and spontaneous character of the conceptual sign, without having to invoke mediating mental contents [53] (e. g., species).[54] In the final analysis, then, a universal concept is a natural sign, but, be it noted, one which in no way differs from the act of understanding (*quodlibet universale est intentio animae, quae . . . ab actu intelligendi non differt. Unde dicunt, quod intellectio . . . est signum naturale*).[55]

First Objection: Against the Universality of the Concept

Having determined that the universal concept is a mental quality (*actus intelligendi*) which is naturally significative of many extramental things, we shall now consider two objections which might be raised against this position. The initial objection specifically concerns the universality of the concept. Thus, according to Ockham, "every real being is singular."[56] If so, this must mean that the universal concept is itself "truly and really singular,"[57] since, as was just indicated, the universal concept is a veritable mental quality, and hence a species of real being (*esse subjectivum*). But such a consequence appears to entrap Ockham in a logical quandary. If we allow that the universal concept is a singular quality, how can it be maintained that said concept is representative of many extramental things, in that, by Ockham's own testimony, singularity denotes that which is not representative of many?[58]

But this objection, far from invalidating the Ockhamist conceptual theory, serves instead to highlight further the true nature of his theory. What the objection fails to appreciate is that the universality in question concerns, not the being of

[53] See *Expositio super librum Perihermenias*, in *PW*, p. 47: "Hence, just as the spoken word stands by convention for a thing, so the act of intellect, by its very nature, and without any convention, stands for the thing to which it refers."

[54] See *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 8, p. 269.

[55] *SL*, I, Ch. 15, p. 48.

[56] *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 8, p. 266: "Omne reale est singulare."

[57] *PW*, p. 36; SL, I, Ch. 14, p. 44.

[58] *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 7, pp. 236-237.

the concept (which *qua* mental being is singular, not many), but the concept as *significative* of many things.[59] Just as the sun, a particular thing, may be called 'universal cause' by reason of its multiple effects, so also the concept, in itself a particular thing, may be called 'universal' because it is a sign predicable of many.[60] Or if you prefer less metaphorical language, the point may be stated this way:

> Just as every word, no matter how common it may be by convention, is truly and really singular and numerically one, since it is one thing and not many, so likewise the mental content [*intentio animae*] that signifies several things outside is truly and really singular and numerically one, since it is one thing and not many things, though it signifies several things.[61]

In sum, " we have to say that every universal is one singular thing. Therefore, nothing is universal except by signification, by being a sign of several things." [62] So much for the first objection.

Second Objection: Against the Signification of the Concept

The second objection stems immediately from the response to the first, and relates specifically to the significative function of the universal concept. To begin with, let us recall Ockham's earlier conclusion that the sole occupants of the external order are irreducible particulars. As this is the case, and even conceding the Philosopher's just-mentioned conclusion that nothing is universal save by being a universal sign or concept, it seems entirely reasonable to ask: of what is a universal a sign? or, if you will, to what does the universal concept correspond? Obviously, if all that exist extramentally are singulars, and these possess no resembling properties in and among themselves,[63] two conclusions appear to be unavoidable: (1) universal concepts refer to nothing in the external world, and hence (2) are devoid of meaning.

[59] *PW*, p. 36; *SL*, I, Ch. 14, p. 44.
[60] *PW*, p. 37; *SL*, I, Ch. 14, p. 45.
[61] *PW*, p. 36; *SL*, I, Ch. 14, p. 44.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] See footnotes 28 and 29.

Ockham was much too discerning a philosopher not to anticipate such an objection. In accord with his earlier conclusion, he repeats that all extramental things are singular, having nothing of the common about them. Still, continues Ockham, this admission need not entail the inference that universal concepts refer to nothing whatsoever. In point of fact, universal concepts do refer: they refer to the selfsame object as the sense faculty, namely, a singular thing or things.[64]

This is not to imply, however, that there is no distinction between the senses and universal concept. Among other things,[65] there is a distinction in the *manner* whereby each represents or signifies a singular. Whereas the senses represent a singular *qua* singular, according to spatio-temporal conditions, the universal may be said to signify a singular *qua* " confused." By this cryptic term, Ockham is not suggesting that the universal signifies things erroneously, but rather that it does

not refer more to one thing than to another. For instance, to say that we have a confused intellection of man, means that we have a cognition by which we do not understand one man rather than another, but that by such a cognition we have a cognition of a man rather than a donkey. And this amounts to saying that such a cognition, by some kind of assimilation, bears a greater resemblance to a man than to a donkey, but does not resemble one man rather than another.[66]

I venture to say that if Ockham meant the above remarks as an answer to the manner in which universals represent singulars, it is doubtful that he could have meant it as anything other than a tentative and generic one. Even a cursory perusal of the citation is amply instructive of its inadequacy as a re-

[64] *Quodlibeta*, I, q. XIII, in *PW*, pp. 30-31.

[65] Most notably, there is a distinction between the immateriality of the intellect and the physical nature of the sense faculty.

[66] *Expositio super librum Perihermenias*, in *PW*, pp. 47-48. The same point is made in *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 8, pp. 267-268: " Universale est conceptus mentis, et . . . ille conceptus est realiter ipsa intellectio, ita quod tunc universale non esset, nisi intellectio confusa rei, quae intellectio, quia (ipsa) non plus intelligitur unum singulare quam reliquum, ipsa esset indifferens et communis ad omnia singularia. . . ."

joinder to the second objection. For though it is well and good to depict a confused intellection as one which does not refer more to one singular than to another, *in concreto* this can only mean that two or more objects bear a greater likeness to one another than to other objects. That this is the case is evident from the fact that his only apparent alternative is to represent a confused intellection as one in which no singular is more similar to another singular than to any other. But such an alternative admits of two interpretative possibilities. It can be taken to mean that each singular is totally *unlike* every other singular, or inversely, that each singular is totally *like* every other. Upon reflection, it is clear that neither interpretation is at all congenial to the Ockhamist theory of universals: in the former case, we deny outright even the possibility of universality; whereas, in the latter, we render the universal conception meaningless by effectively eliminating any differentiating character in the real order.

By dint of sheer exclusion, then, Ockham's " confused intellection " appears, as was said, to amount to a cognition wherein two or more objects bear a greater resemblance to each other than to other objects. Nor does Ockham provide any reason to doubt such an interpretation, at least insofar as his treatment of confused intellection is concerned. For one thing, it would certainly be straining credibility to the brink to regard his remark that " such a cognition . . . bears a greater resemblance to a man than to a donkey. . . ." as anything but a concession to a similarity-base among a fixed number of individuals. And, if this is not a sufficiently unequivocal citation, one need only glance at the very next paragraph to remove every trace of doubt. In responding to the question of how a confused cognition can " refer to an infinite number of singulars without being a cognition proper to any one of them," Ockham's surprising rejoinder is that this is possible " because of some specific likeness between these individuals that does not exist between others." [67]

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Accordingly, that he could not have meant his discussion of confused intellection as anything more than a tentative and generic reply to so obvious an objection should be clear. Not only does he fail to answer the objection that universal concepts are devoid of reference and hence meaningless; even worse, insofar as he appeals to " specific likenesses," he evidently contravenes his earlier repudiation of extramental commonality in any way, shape or form, that is to say, his hardearned principle of radical individuality.

Fortunately for Ockham, though, his remarks on confused intellection do not exhaust his reasons supportive of the referential status of universal concepts. In truth, the Philosopher's more sophisticated rationale is embodied in his views on the origin of human knowledge (ideogenesis). To hear him out on this score, therefore, it is only right that we delve into the appropriate principles of his ideogenetic theory, beginning with his two main categories of human knowledge: " intuitive cognition " (*notitia intuitiva*) and "abstractive cognition" (*notitia abstractiva*).

Ockham regards intuitive cognition as an immediate intellectual perception of a present, singular thing.[68] What is perhaps initially arresting about this definition is the fact that Ockham deems even sensible objects immediately (not mediately) subject to intellective perception. But some, if not all, of the strangeness is removed when we realize that he is not denying the causal efficacy of the senses, but rather is affirming (1) that the intellect relates as immediately to sense objects as does the sense faculty,[69] and (2) that the intellect, and the intellect alone, truly *knows*, in that it is the intellect alone which can judge whether a thing exists or not.[70]

[68] Prologue to the *Ordinatio*, q. 1, n. sqq., in *PW*, p. 26; *Quodlibeta*, I, q. XIII, in *PW*, pp. 31-32.

[69] *Quodlibeta*, I, q. XIII, in *PW*, pp. 31-32.

[70] *Quodlibeta*, I, q. XV, in *Selections*, II, pp. 366-368. It should be noted that Ockham espoused the view that one can have an intuition of a *non*existing object as well as an existing one. He elaborated his reasons for this in *Quodlibeta*, VI q. VI (see either *PW*, pp. 28-30, or *Selections*, II, pp. 372-375). Though important

As to the objects of intuitive cognition, Ockham places these in four distinct classes. There is the class of extramental sensible objects, whether incomplex (e. g., I spy Socrates), or complex (e. g., I perceive that Socrates is conversing with Euthyphro), as well as three classes of intelligible, mental objects: the class of feelings, the class of knowledge (understanding and reasoning), and the class of willing.[71]

For our purposes, the significant point to bear in mind about intuitive cognition is that, in Ockham's considered opinion, it is the one and only entry into the experiential world. This follows from the given, evidential character of intuition, whereby the intuitor achieves immediate contact with present, empirical and 'real' objects and events. In one word, perception of the existence or non-existence of things is exclusively a function of intuition.[72]

These points vis-a-vis intuition are perhaps best epitomized by Ockham himself when he states that

> Intuitive cognition of a thing is cognition that enables us to know whether a thing exists or does not exist, in such a way that if the thing exists, then the intellect immediately judges that it exists and evidently knows that it exists, unless the judgment happens to be impeded through imperfection of the cognition.[73]

in light of his overall system, such a distinction has no appreciable bearing on our present concern to highlight the fact that intuition places one in immediate contact with the existential order.

[71] Prologue to the *Ordinatio*, q. 1, n. sqq., in *PW*, pp. 23-25; *Quodlibeta*, I, q. XIV, in *Selections*, II, pp. 395-398.

[72] Prologue to the *Expositio super viii libros Physicorum*, *in PW*, p. 6, Prologue to the *Ordinatio*, q. 1, n. sqq., in *PW*, p. 27.

[73] Prologue to the *Ordinatio*, q. 1, n. sqq., in *PW*, p. 26. The precise manner in which intuition occurs is explained by Ockham thusly: He first states that every act of knowledge involves a two-part causality: the object, or that which makes itself known, and the intellect, or that which knows. Next, he highlights two causal facets of the objects: (a) that the object is the active or productive pole in the causal relation, and (b) that it is a "univocal cause" (*causa univoca*); to wit, a cause whose effect is always similar to itself. Applying these two facets to the question of the derivation of intuitive knowledge, Ockham's theory boils down to this: (1) since the object is the active cause of cognition, it can produce a noetic effect in the intellect, and (2) since the object is a univocal cause of cognition, it can produce an effect resembling itself in the intellect, namely, a

In contrast to intuitive cognition, abstractive cognition may be generically defined as a knowledge which prescinds from the existence or non-existence of its object.[74] Accordingly, abstractive cognition lacks the evidential character of intuition.

Through abstractive cognition no contingent truth, in particular none relating to the present, can be evidently known. This is clear from the fact that when Socrates and his whiteness are known in his absence, this non-complex knowledge does not enable us to know whether Socrates exists or does not exist, or whether he is white or not white, and the same for other contingent truths.[75]

Speaking less generically, Ockham distinguishes two specific senses of abstraction: abstraction from a singular and abstraction from many singulars. By the former, he envisages a mental representation of a singular object, namely, a memory or an image. What makes such a representation an abstraction is the fact that it " abstracts from existence or non-existence and from all other conditions which contingently belong to or are predicated of a thing." [76] Thus, an image is an abstraction because it permits no judgment as to the actual existence of its object; were the object perceptibly present to the knower, he would not have an image but rather an intuition of said object.

The other and, to us, more important sense of abstractive cognition is abstraction from many singulars. By this, Ockham understands a mental content which, because " it can be abstracted from many things," can stand for an entire class of individuals: in short, the already discussed universal concept.[77]

All that has heretofore been said apropos of universality still holds, save that now we see universality as a species of abstraction, and hence as a mental quality which, of itself, lacks any

singular cognition. See also Guillelmus De Occam, *Opera Plurima*: *In Sententiarum, Reportatio*, II, q. 15, EE (Lyon). Note: the Lyon edition is the earliest publication of Ockham's *Commentary*. Henceforth references to Book I of this edition will be cited *Ordinatio* (Lyon); references to other Books will be cited *Reportatio* (Lyon).

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 26-27.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[76] *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

immediate contact with the real, empirical order. For this reason, avers Ockham, we must acknowledge that, as far as " the order of origin of cognition " [78] is concerned, universality is necessarily dependent on intuitive cognition. This dependence he expresses variously. He states, for instance, that " naturally speaking, all abstractive knowledge of something . . . presupposes intuitive knowledge. . . ." ; again, that " singular knowledge is the cause of universal knowledge. . . ." ; and again, that " incomplex knowledge of some creature in itself leads to knowledge of another thing in a common concept." [79] In a word, intuitive cognition is the presuppositional, causal and inductive entrée to abstractive universality.

In consequence of Ockham's concern to link universality derivatively to intuition, Boehner's claim that he founds universality in the nonmental order seems well in keeping with the facts. And if so, this insures against any recommendation that his cognitive theory is a species of conceptualism, and therefore a denial of a real relation between thought and reality.[80] We might also add that what lends further credibility to Boehner's realistic appraisal is that it squares rather well with Ockham's previously-considered conclusion that the universal concept is a real being (*esse subjectivum*), and not merely a fictive thought-object (*esse objectivum*). As such, the universal is actually an expression of its extramental object, and hence must needs exist in a relation of correspondence or similarity with reality—precisely Boehner's contention. (The implications of Ockham's realistic sympathies for his theory of universals will be discussed subsequently in the evaluation).

In any event, now that we have looked at the Ockhamist

[78] *Quodlibeta*, I, q. XIII, in *PW*, p. 35.

[79] These quotes constitute my translations of passages accumulated by Boehner, in *Collected Articles*, pp. 205, 206, 208. These passages, in order of translation, are: (1) " Omnis notitia abstractiva alicuius rei . . . , naturaliter loquendo, praesupponit notitiam intuitivam eiusdem rei. . . ." *Ordinatio*, Prologue, q. 9; (2) " Notitia singularis est causa notitiae universalis. . . ." *Ibid.*; (3) " Notitia incomplexa alicuius creaturae in se ducit in notitiam alterius rei in conceptu communi." *Reportatio*, III, q. 9.

[80] See *Collected Articles*, pp. 159-163.

notions of intuition and abstraction, and have mentioned the derivative link between them, we should consider the abstractive process more closely, so as to determine how, given the presence of singular cognitions in the intellect, the intellect proceeds to abstract from them their common features.

To this vital question, however, Ockham proffers no formal reply. In fact, there is no formal reply to such a question for the simple reason that, ultimately, the whole abstractive operation is shrouded in mystery. As Ockham puts it:

> Nature produces universals in a secret manner (*occulte*) . . . because by producing its own knowledge in the soul, as it were secretly . . . it produces those universals in the manner whereby they are of such a nature to be produced.[81]

Still, continues the Philosopher, if nature will not yield to unaided reason the how of abstraction, it does nonetheless allow us to ascertain that it occurs. In other words, we are at least certain " that universals . . . are caused naturally, without any activity of intellect and will, from incomplex cognitions [singu-

[81] My translation of: " Natura occulte operatur in universalibus . . . quia producendo cognitionem suam in anima, quasi occulte . . . producit illa universalia, illo modo quo nata sunt produci." *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 7, p. 261. Note: In his recent comprehensive study of Ockham's thought, *William of Ockham: The Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse* (Totowa, N. J., 1975), Gordon Leff points up the place of habit-formation in the abstractive process. Leff writes that Ockham " stresses in the *Quodlibets* that an act of knowing something already known must in itself presuppose a habit. Without a habit the intellect would be no more disposed to know something after previously knowing it than before and so would remain in the same state of potential knowledge towards everything. . . . We need only observe here that it must equally apply to concepts as natural signs of what is already known. Hence while it is true that Ockham rejects the notion of a concept as a habit *tout court*, a concept as an act of knowing carries with it the presumption of a habit. . . . [C]oncepts are the way in which the mind knows real things in abstraction through a habit." (pp. 103-104) In highlighting the role of habit-formation in the abstractive process, Leff provides a valuable insight into the conditions surrounding Ockham's abstractive theory. Such an insight, however, still leaves pending the central question of how abstraction actually occurs; that is to say, it *presupposes* abstraction. Here, it would seem, Ockham anticipates David Hume's famed application of " custom " to the question of universals. See Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, Part 1, Sec. 7, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1967), pp. 20-24.

lar cognitions],"[82] and that they are "caused immediately' by said singulars.[83] In short, we may at least be certain that Ockham's earlier conclusion regarding the universal concept still holds true: that it is a natural and immediate significative affair. Beyond this, he has nothing to offer on the subject.

Here we seem to have reached a crossroad in the discussion; to wit, if we wish to proceed further, we must be ready to accept Ockham's supposition that abstraction does occur (naturally and immediately), even if he cannot hazard a guess as to how it does so. Despite his reticence on this score, I, for my part—the reader must of course decide for himself—choose to forge ahead, so as to determine whether he provides some response to the all-important second objection, the manner by which universals signify and refer to extramental singulars. Should we generously grant Ockham the *fact* of abstraction, it is still incumbent upon him to reveal how the given products of abstraction, universals, may be said to signify their objects. In this vein, we recall that he has already stated his view that universals originate with and derive from real, extramental singulars via abstraction. This being so, it follows that what universals express or represent must be these selfsame real-order singulars. And Ockham himself leaves no room for doubt here when he writes that "Universals declare, express, explicate, import and signify the substances of things . . . that is, their nature, which is their substance" (*Universalia declarant, exprimunt, explicant, important et significant substantias rerum . . . hoc est naturam, quae est substantia*).[84]

Now conceding that universals are expressive of extramental objects, the Ockhamist reference to 'substance' and 'nature' will perhaps give us reason to pause. Is he here suggesting that the extramental counterparts to universals are veritable natures common to a plurality of individuals? No, for this would amount to a flat denial of his entire ontological program.

[82] "Dico quod universalia . . . causantur naturaliter sine omni activitate intellectus et voluntatis a notitiis incomplexis. . . ." *Reportatio*, II, q. 25, O (Lyon).

[83] *Ordinatio*, d. 27, q. 3, J (Lyon).

[84] *SL*, I, Ch. 17, p. 54.

Yet, it cannot be intelligibly maintained that universal concepts refer to sheer singulars, since, by definition, a universal signifies that which is common, not singular, about things. Are we to say, then, that Ockham is hopelessly suspended between the devil of commonality and the deep sea of singularity? It might well seem so, but Ockham does not think so. He believes that a rapprochement between the equally compelling requirements of universality and singularity is possible, if we keep in mind the following metaphysical principles. First, we must realize that when he speaks of substance and nature, he means nothing in the order of a common, shared essence. The substances and natures he envisages are themselves particulars, whose component principles are " particular matter " and " particular form " (*In substantia particulari nihil est substantiale penitus nisi forma particularis et materia particularis vel aliquod compositum ex talibus*).[85] For instance, a man is a man, not in virtue of some common form, " man," but solely in virtue of the concrete fact that he is, thanks to his own particular matter and form, *a* man.

Still, allowing that particular form and particular matter account for the fact that an individual is *a* man, how do they account for the fact that an individual is also a *man*, and hence for the requisite agreement or similarity among men which is the ontological condition of universal concepts? Ockham's reply is as follows. That men resemble one another must not be ascribed to a common " something " which constitutes their essence (*Non debet concedi, quod Sortes et Plato conveniunt in aliquo, quod est de essentia eorum*). To suggest this is in some sense to reify the universal, and so fall victim to the logical perplexities delineated by Ockham in the preceding section. Let it rather be said, declares Ockham, that men agree not in virtue of some common denominator existing over and beyond them, but simply " in themselves " (*seipsis*), that is, " in virtue of their own particular forms " (*suis formis*), which constitute their own particular substances or natures.[86] Thus,

[85] *Ibid.*, Ch. 16, p. 51. See also *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 7, p. 253.
[86] *Ibid.*, Ch. 17, p. 53.

we may epitomize Ockham's response to the referential status of universal concepts accordingly: Insofar as particulars alone exist, universals may be said to refer to particulars. But insofar as there exists within (not outside of) each particular a formal basis of resemblance (*forma particularis*), universals achieve the requisite ontological grounding to become meaningful mental signs.[87]

Evaluation

The above exposition suggests that Ockham's theory of universals, and perhaps his entire ontic program, stands or falls with his defense of a similarity-base in the non-mental order, notwithstanding the radical individuality of that order. As we saw, his defense rests on the subtle distinction that men resemble one another, not in virtue of a common factor transcending them (*non in aliquo*), but simply "in themselves" (*seipsis*), that is, "in virtue of their own particular formal principles" (*suis formis*).

My contention, however, is that, given Ockham's appeal to "particular form" as the ontic foundation of universal concepts, his only real hope for extramental commonality rests with adoption of the moderate realist's doctrine of "potential universals" (see note 30); but that, given his logically-based repudiation of the "universale in re," not only in an actual, platonic sense, but even in a potential sense, he successfully eliminates any such appeal to potential universality as the nonmental grounding of universal concepts. Moreover, I shall argue that Ockham's ontic and epistemic views issue, ultimately, into a species of conceptualism, which, in the end, issues

[87] In a wider sense, such too is Ockham's proposed rapprochement between the equally stringent demands of singularity and universality: insofar as the formal and material principles of a thing are themselves particular, he safeguards his metaphysical doctrine of radical individuality. But insofar as each thing is what it is in virtue of its own formal principle or nature, there exists an ontological bond of agreement in and among things, based on the fact that things agree (*conveniunt*) "in themselves" (*seipsis*), and not in virtue of a supposed common denominator (*non in aliquo*).

into contradiction and/or extreme nominalism. Finally, I shall maintain that, in Ockham's case, extreme nominalism is a necessary consequence of his system's inconsistencies.

(1) *Against a Realist Appraisal of Ockham's Theory of Universals*

If a realist reading of Ockham's theory of universals is correct (as I believe it is), then his problem is to explain the manner in which "particular form" founds a universal conception. Now it seems clear that by *particular* form or nature Ockham cannot understand that which is absolutely different. He explicitly states that men do "agree with one another" (*conveniunt*), and do so by virtue of a principle located "within themselves" (*seipsis*); to wit, "their own particular forms" (*suis formis*). Evidently, what Ockham is here denying is the platonic opinion that men resemble one another on the basis of a common denominator resident "outside of them" (*in aliquo*). In line with his principle of radical individuality, if there is to be such a basis of resemblance, it cannot be something separate from the given, concrete individual.

But here is where the problems arise. If we allow that it is absurd to suggest that particularity can serve as the ontological foundation of commonality, there is no escaping the conclusion that the ground of said commonality must itself be common. Since we know that Ockham rejects the platonic view that all men share in a common essence outside of themselves, it would seem to follow that the common ground of agreement is within each individual man. In other words, each man agrees with other men in virtue of his own form or nature. But if this is what Ockham's seipsis-distinction actually boils down to, what essential difference is there between it and the previously considered "medieval realist" view—the view that there are as many universals as there are concrete individuals? Ockham, we saw, dispensed with medieval realism as readily as he did with platonic realism, and did so in the name of contradiction and/or absurdity. I will not try to improve upon Ockham in this.

Thus, his only apparent recourse is to propound something to the effect that one's particular form bears no likeness to another's. This would have the advantage of exonerating him from any appeal to universals. But one wonders if in fact anything is gained here, since in so doing we are driven back to the question which prompted these considerations: how does a particular form found a universal concept?

We know, of course, that Ockham would vehemently oppose such an assessment of his theory of universals. We are aware that his " forma particularis " represents an attempt to found universals extramentally, without having to accord them a thing-status. I would suggest, though, that in light of his critique of extramental universality, his views on universality do not make sense apart from appeal to platonic principles. To see what I mean, let us backtrack somewhat and grant that Ockham's " forma particularis " ought not to be construed as an actual existent, that is to say, as a thing. If not a thing, then what? It seems to me that his only viable alternative is to view said form as a *potential* universal, *à la* moderate realism. But Ockham, it was seen, repudiates the potential-alternative as contradictory, implying that it is tacitly platonic (since " contradiction is the most powerful way to prove a distinction of things.") [88] On Ockham's own principles, then, all supposed extramental universality—potential as well as actual—entails platonism. Hence my medieval-realist interpretation of his seipsis-distinction.

I want to underscore the fact that Ockham's critique of extramental universality as necessarily platonic and therefore self-contradictory and/or absurd hinges on his presupposition that all distinction is a distinction of things (*distinctio rerum*).[89] The

[88] Worth mentioning is the fact that Ockham rejected the view of some scholastics (e. g., Aquinas) that a " real distinction " (*distinctio realis*) is of *two* kinds: a distinction between things or existents and a distinction between correlative principles of a thing (based on act / potency analysis). Ockham, in keeping with his logically-based presupposition that what is distinct must needs be separate, would admit only the former.

[89] Given this presupposition, we may epitomize his criticism of all theories of extramental universality in two terse propositions: (1) If a universal is a thing

question, of course, is by what right does he presuppose that a distinction of things is the sole distinction? The answer, already alluded to, is that his presupposition rests on an even more basic one: that the ontological order is subject to the logical. In this light, it certainly follows that a distinction of things is all reality will allow, since, from the purely formal perspective of logic,[90] a universal is either a thing or nothing. It is absurd to affirm that a universal is nothing; therefore, a universal has to be a thing. Moreover, since it is both self-evident and logically necessary that a singular is a thing, it follows that where singular and universal are said to be distinct, they must be really distinct, that is, distinguishable as things. Whence the spate of logical contradictions and absurdities delineated by Ockham.

Ultimately, the question we must ask is, just how valid is the Ockhamist reduction of ontology to logic? Certainly, the question is not new to philosophy, and the spectre of Parmenides will doubtless be with us as long as philosophy endures. Still, if I may say so, I am with those who view logic as an aid to valid reasoning about reality, and not as itself an indicator of what really is. Logic does not tell us what really is; it simply helps us clarify and order our thinking about what really is.[91]

and a singular is a thing, then, if distinct, a universal is not a singular (principle of contradiction); and (2) If a universal is a thing and a singular is a thing, then, if indistinct, a universal is a singular, or conversely, a singular is a universal (principle of identity). In " 1 " a being's unity is denied; in " 2 " a being's unity is retained, but at the price of numerical identity.

[90] That is, a perspective untouched by metaphysical and psychological principles.

[91] This may seem out of keeping with my claim that Ockham established the illogic of platonism. Actually, though, this is not the case. In claiming that I was not arguing the subjection of ontology to logic, but rather the illogic of platonism in its own right. In short, platonism was declared illogical because its thing-theory of universals is intrinsically contradictory, not because its theory of universals opposes what *logically* can be said to exist. What might lead one to conclude that I condone the subjecting of ontology to logic is the fact that both platonism and a logically-derived ontoolgy uphold the thing-status of universals. In a word, for platonism, ontology and logic are one. So that to provide a critique of platonism on logical grounds, as does Ockham, is *ipso facto* to provide a critique of platonism on ontological grounds.

Of course, the little matter of 'what really is' is precisely the question prompting these pages, and indeed has always been the foundational question of philosophy since its inception with Thales. But whatever reality ultimately is or is not, there is no gainsaying the untenability of the platonic view thereof. If so, does this necessarily doom all realist ontologies to bankruptcy? Before one can proffer an answer to this question, I submit, one must come to grips with the prior question of whether a realist ontology is all one with a platonic ontology. As far as Ockham is concerned, the subjection of ontology to logic necessitates the thing-status of universals. My question, however, is this: what necessitates the subjection? Is there not at least as much reason to uphold the subjection of logic to reality as there is the converse? I think it may be safely said that there is. But granting that there is, we are perforce driven back to the knotty question of what 'the real' is. Without pretending to be able to answer a question of this obvious magnitude, I will simply suggest, with the moderate realists, that if there is a determinable answer to this question, its discovery is best facilitated through acceptance of the experiential conclusion that only *particular* things inhabit the extramental realm. Whatever evidence can be advanced in support of this conclusion, it is at least clear that said conclusion is neither contradictory nor absurd. Even this minimal claim cannot be made in behalf of a thing-theory of universals, as we have abundantly seen. For this reason alone, one would think, the moderate realist alternative deserves a hearing.

Should we allow moderate realism its hearing, we may then proceed on the supposition that reality governs logic. Such a procedure opens the way to a metaphysical and psychological investigation of universals devoid of the aprioristic strictures of logic. In this light, the case for universals in a potential sense makes sense. In other words, there is no a priori impediment to viewing universals as properties of particular things or substances, which, because they are shared properties, are universalizable by the mind via abstraction. Of course, such a

view is itself subject to critical inspection. And so it should be. But if criticism is to be levelled at a moderate theory of universals, let it be on metaphysical and psychological grounds, not on dubious logicistic grounds. To reverse this critical procedure, as does Ockham, is to arrogate to logic the rightful domains of metaphysics and philosophic psychology.

(2) *Against a Conceptualist Appraisal of Ockham's Theory of Universals*

I rest my case against a realist reading of Ockham's theory of universals. But before jumping to the conclusion that his universal concept signifies nothing and is therefore bereft of meaning, let us, for argument's sake, grant that Ockham is, however inadvertently, a conceptualist in matters epistemic and ontic. Such a concession presupposes our willingness to waive his apparent attempt to found universal concepts extramentally, *à la* realism. If we are prepared to make this concession, we may then proceed to evaluate his universal-theory as if he were a conceptualist.

Now on a conceptualist model, universality is said to be a function, not of reference to resembling features existing outside the mind, but of the mind's power to signify many singulars. For instance, to affirm that "Socrates is a man" is not to affirm that the universal sign, "man," intends or refers to a universal feature, *man*, existing in the extramental realm. It is only to affirm that "Socrates is one of those singular beings whose sign can be 'man'," in contrast to other and different singulars whose sign cannot be "man."

On this view, a universal sign must stand for singulars either nonarbitrarily or arbitrarily. If nonarbitrarily, it would seem to follow that there is some objective reason in Socrates why he is one of those things whose specific sign can be "man." But as our analysis of Ockham has amply demonstrated, the only possible reason outside the mind for universal concepts must needs be something universal. So that to maintain the nonarbitrariness of universal concepts is logically to negate conceptualism, and admit, at least implicitly, the tenets of realism.

On the other hand, to suggest that universal concepts are merely arbitrary leads to even stranger consequences for the would-be conceptualist. In this event, he asserts that there is no objective reason in Socrates why he is one of those beings whose sign can be "man," save that you, or I, or even all of us *say* he is. So that to accord conceptualism an arbitrary status is to relegate universal concepts, if not to meaninglessness, then certainly to subjectivity.[92]

Thus, on the nonarbitrary alternative, Ockham's conceptualism is indistinguishable from realism, resulting in an equivocation on the meaning of conceptualism: Does he mean by conceptualism realism? If so, he equivocates on the meaning of conceptualism. Or does he mean to uphold the tenets of conceptualism? If so, he leaves unexplained the manner whereby a universal concept signifies singulars nonarbitrarily. On the arbitrary alternative, Ockham compromises the objectivity of the universal concept, thereby undermining objectivity in the cognitive as well as extramental sphere. Finally, on this alternative, conceptualism becomes indistinguishable from extreme nominalism, since the precise claim of extreme nominalism is that universals lack objectivity, and in consequence refer arbitrarily to things.

In conclusion, I want to underscore the fact that if Ockham's philosophy issues, ultimately, into a species of extreme nominalism, this is clearly a consequence of his inconsistent principles. Ockham has fallen the unwitting victim of a too extreme rejection of extramental commonality. Subjecting all forms of extramental commonality to the formal categories of logic, he leaves no room for universality in either the actual or the potential sense. Nevertheless, he seems not to have denied that the necessary condition of universal conceptions is a ground of resemblance situated as such in the nonmental sphere. Hence his efforts at reconciling the antipodes, singularity and universality. That such a reconciliation was a doomed venture was perhaps

[92] This argument against Ockham's supposed conceptualism I take to be applicable to every form of conceptualism, save Kant's.

first signalled by his somewhat anomalous appeal to the occult nature of the abstractive process. In view of the atomistic character of the extramental world, what other recourse had he but to entrust abstraction to the domain of mysticism? In any case, he well knew that philosophies are not built on mystic foundations; he had to take a more definitive stand on resemblance somewhere. As it turned out, that somewhere was in the extramental order, in the guise of his seipsis-distinction, whose fate we need not retell. Finally, it is certainly to Ockham's credit that, at least in intent, he did not compromise the objectivity of the universal *qua* conceptual sign. Despite this, however, the fact is that, in so singularizing the extramental order, he ultimately reduces the concept, too, to arbitrariness, and insofar as he does so, reduces his entire philosophy to extreme nominalism.

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TRIDENTINE JUSTIFICATION AS AN ETHICAL PREMISE

A REVIEW ARTICLE

The second volume of the new series, *Woodstock Studies,* generated by Jesuit scholarship at the Woodstock Theological Center in Washington, appeared this year under the expressive title, *The Faith That Does Justice.** Although concentration of the book's nine essays on the theme this title represents was originally stimulated by internal concerns of the Jesuit order, the book's relevance is not narrowly domestic, and it represents one of the all-too-rare attempts by Catholic academic theologians to produce something that might be described with full seriousness as moral theology.

Broadly speaking, the book is concerned to explore the relationship of Christian faith to Christian morals. Thus stated, the subject is clearly an ancient one, extensively treated and even, in a sense, debated, within the New Testament itself. Nevertheless, during much of the history of Christian theology this topic has been viewed in an unfortunately limited perspective. The contexts especially of Pauline vs Jewish, Augustinian vs Pelagian, and Lutheran vs Catholic polemics have had the effect of focussing theological attention on competing theories about the respective sufficiency, mutual necessity, or relative priority of faith and morals with respect to individual salvation.

In the modern era, Protestants have labored in various ways to maintain the validity of *solā fide* while at the same time excluding crudely antinomian implications.[1] Catholics, having made the dogmas of merit and of growth in grace a theological warrant for moral effort, have for the most part directed that effort with little further recourse to theological principles. As a result, what Catholics

* *The Faith That Does Justice: Examining the Christian Sources for Social Change,* ed. John Haughey (New York: Paulist Press, 1977); the present study will concentrate on one essay in this work written by Richard R. Roach and entitled " Tridentine Justification and Justice ".

[1] " A common criticism of the main-line Protestant view is that there is no road from it to ethics, that it represents a cul-de-sac." Ziesler, J. A., *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 5. The author briefly reviews some major attempts to deal with this problem exegetically. *Present Truth,* a journal expressly founded to preserve the purity of Reformation doctrine, has dealt with this problem repeatedly, most extensively in Vol. 3, no. 3 (July, 1974), and Vol. 4, no. 1 (February, 1975).

call moral theology has proceeded independently of dogmatic, systematic, or historical-biblical theology. It operated mainly through the elaboration of natural law theses and the weighing of casuistic precedents, under firm but largely negative control by ecclesiastical officialdom, whose authority in such matters was the only theological principle regularly invoked.

Quite recent times have seen a rapid decline of interest in moral theology of that type, and a widespread tendency to replace it with ethical investigation or prudential moralizing of a more candidly secular kind. But, along with the inclination to abandon theological pretenses, there has also appeared a tendency to provide Christian moralists with more positive and substantial theological foundations. Something of the latter tendency was perceptible in the largely Protestant "social Gospel" movement.[2] The same tendency is considerably more conspicuous in the largely Catholic movement called "liberation theology."[3]

Proponents of liberation theology have been criticized often and not always unfairly for presenting a highly eclectic or even tendentious theology, tailored to fit their political predispositions.[4] A proclivity towards failings of that kind is particularly understandable in view of the fact that so much of this theology has been developed in social and economic circumstances that lend special urgency to practical moralizing, and offer small encouragement to niceties of leisurely scholarship. Against such a background the appearance of a book like *The Faith That Does Justice* is decidedly opportune. It is the work of North American Catholic scholars,

[2] "We have a social Gospel. We need a systematic theology large enough to match it and vital enough to back it." Rauschenbusch, W. *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), p. 1.

[3] "When we talk about theology as critical reflection...we also refer to a clear and critical attitude regarding economic and sociocultural issues in the life and reflection of the Christian community...But above all, we intend this term to express the theory of a definite praxis...a critical theory, worked out in the light of the Word accepted in faith and inspired by a practical purpose." Gutierrez, G. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (New York: Orbis, 1973), p. 11.

[4] "The correspondence between the Gospel and Marxian class analysis is too neat to allay the suspicion that the Bible is being read through the eyes of those who are already convinced Marxists. They quote very selectively from the biblical passages that exalt the poor, and assert too sweepingly that God is always on the side of the poor and the oppressed." Dulles, A. "The Meaning of Faith Considered in Relationship to Justice," in Haughey, J., ed., *op. cit.*, 10-46, p. 40.

from several well-established theological faculties, representing several academic specialties, addressing themselves directly to a long-neglected issue currently posed by liberation theology. It may be hoped that their undertaking will be widely enough imitated to generate constructive discussion of the positive relationship of Christian faith to Christian morals.

It is as a minor contributor to such dialogue that in the remainder of this article I shall offer some specific comments on one essay in the book I have been praising. The fact that these reflections express considerable doubt and disagreement does not belie my positive appreciation either of the book as a whole or of the essay in question.

Richard R. Roach, in his essay entitled "Tridentine Justification and Justice," defends a thesis, with which I entirely agree, "that Christian faith absolutely requires the pursuit of justice in this world." [5] He suggests that "we can understand this nexus of terms...properly if we begin with the term... 'faith'" in its "traditional and specifically Roman Catholic use." [6] He notes that "that traditional understanding emphasizes intellectual assent to revealed truth...and ties faith to a justification which as such requires good works...and is the principle of their merit." [7]

The author goes on to explain that, "for at least two reasons, Trent taught that one could not rely solely on a fiducial faith." [8] The first reason given is that "although one's salvation was 'inside' one even in this life, nonetheless it had to manifest itself in deeds." [9] The second reason is "that faith is but part of a plan of salvation in which good works are necessary." [10] Although the two preceding statements can be understood in a sense agreeable to Trent, it is questionable whether they are accurately designated as the "reasons" for Trent's teaching. It is also questionable whether "although...nonetheless" are really the appropriate conjunctions to use in the first "reason."

But more seriously questionable is the account of "Trent's specific claim regarding justification by faith" given subsequently

[5] Roach, R. "Tridentine Justification and Justice," in Haughey, J., ed., *op. cit.*, 181-206, p. 181. This is the author's paraphrase of a policy statement in *Documents of the Thirty-Second General Congregation of the Society of Jesus* (Washington, D. C.: The Jesuit Conference, 1975), p. 17.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

in the following two sentences: " Trent taught that we are justified by faith in the sense that God gratuitously justifies us. This results in a faith without which we are not pleasing to God." [11] I, for my part, find it impossible to reconcile this summary with Trent's Decree on Justification, either in chapter 6, on " the mode of preparation " for justification, or in chapter 8, on " how to understand that the sinner is justified by faith and gratuitously." [12] The former chapter explicitly includes faith in the disposition for justification, not only in its intellectual sense as belief in revelation, " prompted and aided by grace," but also in its fiducial sense as equated with hope.[13] The latter chapter interprets justification by faith to mean that " faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification." [14] It then interprets the gratuitousness of justification to mean that " none of the things that precede justification, whether faith or works, merit the grace that justifies." [15] Roach's explanation of Trent's doctrine on these points seems to me, on the basis of the text alone, evidently misleading.

For Roach, however, there remains " a more specific teaching in the Tridentine decree which strengthens the link between faith and justice." [16] This is " Trent's account of the formal cause of our justification," which he cites in the following version of an excerpt from chapter 7:

> Finally the single formal cause (*unica formalis causa*) is the justice of God, not that by which he himself is just but that by which he makes us just, that, namely, whereby being endowed with it by him, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and not only are we reputed but are truly called and are just, receiving justice within us, each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Spirit distributes to everyone as he wills (1 Cor 12:11), and according to each one's disposition and cooperation.[17]

He finds " two items of importance for us today " in this passage: " first, that justification is participation in the justice of God for

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 184, presumably based on chapter 7 of the decree.

[12] *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, Centro di Documentazione, Istituto per le Scienze Religiose—Bologna, ed., (Freiburg: Herder, 1962), pp. 648-650.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 648.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 650.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 650.

[16] Roach, R., *art. cit.*, p. 184.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 185. Cited from Neuner, J., and Roos, H., eds., *The Teachings of the Church* (New York: Alba House, 1967), p. 387-388.

his creation, and, second, that this created justice is real within us in this life." [18] He regrets that " the second item of importance has obscured the first." [19] He means by this obscuration that " when the emphasis falls on the inherence of justification within us, Trent's notion of the ' justice of God ' loses its ' objective ' force," with the result that " it can seem that the justice of God by which he makes us just consists solely in a state of personal or subjective being much like a disposition or virtue." [20] What he regrets about this is that " the justice of God, then, need not imply changes in, or requirements for, the objective order of human affairs." [21]

The preceding remark clearly takes us beyond an interpretation of Trent (to which I shall return presently), to a personal preoccupation which strongly influences Roach's special interest in this part of the decree. He believes that " when the justice of God is not seen to require adaptations and transformations of the objective order of human affairs, the tendency is to regard the structure of that order as if it were like a structure of physical nature." [22] This tendency he identifies with " a subjective emphasis in moral matters " which " points to the intentions and purposes of human agents as individuals..., to the structure of their characters, their virtues and vices, and by a slight extension names those choices and activities which have little or no effect in the larger, social world, but do indicate the quality of the subjects performing them." [23]

I have great difficulty in following the line of thought I have just outlined. I have still greater difficulty in accepting what I take to be its main point, that the idea of a subjective change wrought in individuals by the grace of God must leave them relatively indifferent to or ineffectual in the sphere of social reform. Here the author seems to confuse, or assume that others will confuse, a subjective disposition with a disposition to subjectivity. Social zeal and philanthropic altruism are, after all, if they are anything, subjective dispositions or personal characteristics. Indeed, it was the view of many of the Tridentine theologians that what Roach calls the " state of personal or subjective being " imparted in justification was identical with love. Nothing in the Council's

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

teaching opposes that interpretation, whereas the decree itself states that " God's love inheres in those who are justified." [24] No doubt the idea of divine love inhering in human persons can be understood in a sense congenial to moral and social apathy, but traditional Catholic theology, with extraordinary uniformity both before Trent and after, is dead against such an understanding. If one seriously doubts that Trent was in touch with that aspect of tradition, one needs only to read the sermon, on the power, wisdom, and goodness of love, that was delivered to the Council Fathers at the Mass just before they voted to approve the Decree on Justification *universaliter, ab omnibus, uno consensu.*[25]

Regardless of whether or not one shares Roach's opinion that the idea of a subjective, inherent change wrought by justification has a spontaneously inhibiting effect on social action, there remains the question of what he finds in Trent to remedy this supposed effect. We have already seen that he locates the remedy in Trent's " account of the formal cause of our justification," wherein he finds two distinct items of importance. Since one of them is the idea of inherent justice which supposedly causes the problem of " subjectivity," it must be the other one that offers a solution. Roach's formulation of this other item states that " justification is participation in the justice of God for his creation." [26] The corresponding words of the decree state that justification's " single formal cause is the justice of God." [27] Since the two statements are not verbally equivalent, Roach is evidently interpreting the wording of the decree, and our next task is to consider the basis and meaning of his interpretation.

In this interpretation the author's reasoning is quite subtle, and his conclusion is, as far as I know, quite original. It should also be noted that he regards the text he is interpreting as " ambiguous." [28] But at the same time he maintains that " the formal conditions (that is to say, a sufficiently clear understanding of the ' justice of God ' so as to be able to resolve the ambiguity) do exist

[24] *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, p. 649.

[25] *Concilium Tridentinum: Diariorum, actorum, epistolarum, tractatuum nova collectio*, Görres-Gesellschaft, ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1901-1930), V, 802. The universal approval was acclaimed by Cardinal de Monte. The sermon, adroitly linking the liturgical occasion, Epiphany Octave, with the doctrine of justification shortly to be decreed, was delivered by Tommaso Stella, bishop of Salpi. *Ibid.*, V, 811-817.

[26] *Art. cit.*, p. 185.

[27] *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, p. 649.

[28] Roach, R., *art. cit.*, p. 187.

in the Tridentine decree." [29] The key to solving the ambiguity is said to be " implicit in the understanding of 'form' or *unica formalis causa* in the decree itself." [30]

Earlier, the author had defined a formal cause as " that component of an entity that makes it what it is and not something else." [31] Although that much is certainly confirmed by the most general scholastic usage, a more partisan idiom appears shortly afterward, when we are told that the formal cause of justification is " the 'component' of God's redemptive love received in a person, or in which the person shares or participates." [32] The reference to participation which is brought in at this point is the same reference that marked a main difference between the wording of the decree and the author's interpretative rewording of it. Although the shift of idiom is in a platonizing direction, the different wording is not sufficient evidence of different meaning. Such evidence, however, is not lacking. It is to be found in the peculiar importance Roach attributes to the adjective *unica* in the phrase *unica formalis causa.* Since this part of his argument is both very clear and very crucial, it will be best to quote somewhat extensively from the relevant passages:

> A form must be the form of something, and...the form exists numerically in as many instances as there are entities which it informs. If the form is unique as is the form of the " justice of God " (*unica formalis causa*), and if many otherwise individual entities share or participate in the form, then the form must be the shape or structure of a reality that is more cohesive than a mere aggregate.[33]

What the author has concretely in mind as the " reality...more cohesive than a mere aggregate " appears in a subsequent passage which also further elucidates his interpretation of *unica*:

> The objective order of human affairs and the " justice of God " which is its true form can be no mere aggregate, for a mere aggregate has no single form. Each item in the aggregate has its own form autonomously, that is, to the exclusion of another inclusive form. Were our justification merely a subjective disposition or virtue and our good works merely individual and as such exclusive of a societal form within them, then it would have been more appropriate for Trent to have taught that the formal cause of our justification was multiple.[34]

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

One last quotation from Roach's essay displays with particular clarity the logic of his position:

> In the clear terms of hylomorphism, we must choose between two understandings of the single formal cause of our justification. Either it is an abstract universal term which is only grammatically singular and actually plural as it inheres with indefinite variety in an indefinite number of individuals, or it is actually singular, in which case it is the objective form of a collectivity, community, or society and inheres in individuals only insofar as they participate in that community. If one takes seriously Trent's insistence on *unica*, the latter alternative is preferable.[35]

The remainder of this article will try to take " seriously Trent's insistence on *unica*," but before taking up that subject I would express some misgivings about the methods exhibited in the preceding quotations. Although *unica formalis causa* is, of course, scholastic language, its conciliar context is not a scholastic disputation, and the membership of the Council who adopted these words comprise not only devotees of several different scholastic systems, but some also who were inclined to eschew scholasticism altogether. In view of Roach's appeal to " Thomistic metaphysics " [36] it may be worth noting that the scholastic majority at the Council were not Thomists but Scotists.[37] Moreover, the theologian who contributed most to the wording of the Decree on Justification, himself not a partisan scholastic, had pleaded eloquently on pastoral grounds at the very start of the discussion for a deliberate avoidance of scholastic terminology.[38] But more important than these details is the fact that the Council's documents neither constitute a part of any scholastic literature nor formally endorse any scholastic system. Consequently, to draw hermeneutic inferences from conciliar propositions by means of specifically scholastic premises is a dubious procedure at best. Trent's doctrine of transubstantiation has been so notoriously abused in this way that it tends now to be approached with due caution, but other texts, such as the one we are dealing with, may offer similar temptations.

The phrase *unica formalis causa* in the Decree on Justification represents a confluence of two distinct but intimately related lines of argument, one represented by *unica*, and the other by *causa for-*

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 184, 189.

[37] Jedin, H. *Papal Legate at the Council of Trent: Cardinal Seripando* (St. Louis: Herder, 1947), pp. 339-340.

[38] *Concilium Tridentinum*, XII, 614-615.

malis. The latter one is the simpler of the two. At the start of the conciliar discussion of justification (which had, of course, been touched on repeatedly in the previous deliberations on original sin) a set of six questions was proposed to be examined and answered.[39] The second of these questions asked, " What are the causes of justification, that is, what does God do and what is required on man's part? " [40] Although the question as stated might seem to limit the consideration of causes simply to distinguishing and relating the divine and human contributions to justification, theologians with scholastic habits of thought were naturally drawn to apply metaphysical categories of causality that had been used so widely in the schools during the previous three centuries.

It is hardly surprising that the first recorded response to the question about justification's causes distinguished three categories of causes, identifying the efficient cause as *solus Deus*, the meritorious cause as *passio Christi*, and the formal cause as *ipsa iustitia*.[41] Of the seven theologians who had time to respond on that same day, two others likewise referred to a formal cause of justification, identified by one as *gratia Dei*, and by the other as *gratia gratum faciens*.[42] Explicit references to a formal cause of justification occur intermittently, and fairly frequently thereafter, even after the initial list of questions was superseded by a different set of guidelines based on " three conditions of men (*tres status hominum*)," which repeated the questions about what God does and what is required of man, but made no reference to " causes." [43]

Although the causal terminology was expressly avoided by some of the Council's theologians in favor of more biblical and less technical language, the conviction that the phrase " formal cause of justification " was intended to express appears far more frequently than the phrase itself. This was the conviction that justification, conferred freely and exclusively by God, entailed a real interior transformation of the human being who was justified. Thomas Aquinas had spoken in this connection of " something in

[39] *Ibid.*, V, 261.

[40] *Ibid.*, V, 261.

[41] *Ibid.*, V, 262.

[42] *Ibid.*, V, 263.

[43] For convenience, only the adult convert was envisaged, leaving the case of infants to be treated with baptism. The three *status* are: 1) transition from infidelity to fidelity, 2) preservation and development of justification and arrival at glory, 3) recovery of justification lost by sin. This broad division of the subject is found in the final decree. *Concilium Tridentinum*, V, 281.

the soul," whereas Scotists, considering it really identical with charity, taught that it inhered specifically in the will. But both major branches of scholasticism represented at the Council agreed that to be justified implies a changed condition of and in the subject, the human individual. This essential point was conspicuous in the theologically elaborate response given by Salmeron on the second day of the discussion, when he explained that to be justified is " to receive a gift or habit of justice " and that " in justification God does two things " of which the first (not both!) is " to not impute or to condone sins, to infuse a habit of faith, hope, charity." [44] The common theme which appears thus early in the discussion represents, despite its diversity of language, an idea that was not significantly controversial within the Council, but represented a generally united opposition to Luther. To trace this theme (as distinct from its vocabulary and theological presumptions) through the deliberations, is an easy and rather monotonous task. Scholastic vocabulary did finally triumph, but scholastic disputes were left deliberately unresolved in the final statement, already quoted, of the Decree on Justification.

The other term, *unica*, found its way into the decree as a modifier of *formalis causa* from the different and more complicated background of a recent theological formula known as " twofold justice (*duplex iustitia*)." The significance of twofold justice first came to light in connection with the Ratisbon conference held four years before Trent with a view to reconciling Protestants and Catholics, and which achieved far-reaching doctrinal agreement before being effectively nullified by personal and political factors. At Ratisbon, Martin Bucer and Johann Gropper arrived at a compromise description of justification, claiming the authority of St. Augustine, which in effect combined the Protestant idea of imputed justice with the Catholic idea of inherent justice.[45] This conception, or variant forms thereof, gained support from such major Catholic theologians as Cajetan, Catharinus, Contarini, Pighi, and Pflug. All of these are referred to in the same passage by the chief proponent of this doctrine at Trent, the papal legate, Girolamo Seripando.[46]

[44] *Ibid.*, V, 266.

[45] Jedin, H., *A History of the Council of Trent* (St. Louis: Herder, 1961), II, pp. 168-169, 200-201, 257-258.

[46] *Concilium Tridentinum*, V, 487. Seripando had produced a preliminary treatise on justification in July, 1546, which summarizes his position before modifications were occasioned by discussion. *Concilium Tridentinum*, XII, 613-636.

Seripando's understanding of twofold justice had been expressed in writing even before the Council's discussions began. By October 8th, 1546, it had already encountered considerable opposition, and the Augustinian general proposed it on that occasion with deliberate impersonality:

> They (the theologians referred to above) say the whole state of this question is whether we who have been justified and are consequently to be glorified in accordance with the text " whom he has justified, them also has he glorified," are to be judged before the divine tribunal by one justice alone, I mean the justice of our works proceeding from God's grace, which is in ourselves, or by a twofold justice, our own, in the first place, as I have already stated, and in the second place the justice of Christ, fulfilling by Christ's passion, merit, and satisfaction, the imperfection of our own justice.[47]

Despite the clarity of this proposition, one forms an impression in reading the Council records that twofold justice continued to mean somewhat different things to different discussants. The conception of it that led to its rejection understood it to mean that the inherent justice of believers in the state of grace was in the long run inadequate, having to be supplemented by another subsequent inherent justice. Although Seripando clearly did not say precisely that, it was thought to be implicit in what he did say. And once the idea of inherent justice had come to be expressed as the formal cause of justification, identified as the justice of God, the question about twofold justice became logically identical with a question of whether or not there is a twofold formal cause of justification.

After Seripando's October statement, the question of twofold justice was taken up vigorously and debated under a variety of aspects.[48] By the end of that month, Seripando's position had suffered a decisive refutation, for which Laynez has generally (whether or not correctly) been given main credit.[49] When in November Seripando again addressed himself to the subject, it was with hope no longer of winning a place for his theory in the decree, but only of vindicating his personal piety and orthodoxy.[50] A vote taken in December issued in the Council's definitive rejection of *duplex iustitia*.[51]

[47] *Ibid.*, V, 486.
[48] Jedin, H., *Papal Legate at the Council of Trent: Cardinal Seripando*, pp. 359 ff.
[49] Jedin, H., *A History of the Council of Trent*, II, pp. 256-257.
[50] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 286-287. *Concilium Tridentinum*, V, 666-676.
[51] *Concilium Tridentinum*, V, 691.

Against this background, the meaning of *unica* in *unica formalis* causa is fairly plain. Its meaning is determined by its purpose, and its sole purpose was the positive exclusion (without direct condemnation) of the doctrine of twofold justice, as implying in scholastic idiom a twofold formal cause of justification. As, during the second half of 1546, the issue of twofold justice became sharper, so too did verbal responses to it, including those in successive drafts of the decree. In the first draft, of July 24th, we are told that " the justice of God and Christ is made our justice " and that it is " that grace of God which is given in justification. . .whereby alone (*una*) those who are just are truly just." [52] In the second draft, of September 23rd, it is roundly stated that " there are not two justices which are given to us, God's and Christ's, but one justice of God (*una iustitia Dei*) through Jesus Christ." [53] In a revision of October 31st, scholastic terminology made entry, declaring that " the causes of the sinner's justification, which consists simultaneously in washing away of sins, sanctification, and infusion of gifts, are: [after listing final, meritorious, efficient, and instrumental] formal, the one justice of God (*formalis iustitia una Dei*)." [54] In the third draft, of November 5th, the same list of causes reappears, again including as " formal, the one justice of God (*formalis iustitia una Dei*)." [55] In a revision of the pertinent chapter on December 11th, the first four causes are listed in a single sentence as before, but a new sentence sets off the statement that, " Finally, the sole formal cause is that justice of God (*unica formalis causa est iustitia illa Dei*) not whereby he himself is just, but whereby he makes us just before him (*coram ipso*)." [56] Replacement here of the previously recurring *una* by *unica* was explained on this occasion by the bishop of Bitonto, as intended " to show that there is one justice whereby we are formally justified." [57] In the final decree of January 13th, the same sentence stands, as we have seen, after

[52] *Ibid.*, V, 386.

[53] *Ibid.*, V, 423. In August, Seripando had written two preliminary drafts, the second of which contained a separate chapter *De duplici iustitia*, offering a less controversial understanding of twofold justice as first, " the justice of Christ our head diffused through his whole body the Church and communicated and applied to the members through faith and the sacraments," and second, " the grace or charity diffused by the merits of our redeemer in the hearts of those who are justified by the Holy Spirit given to them." *Concilium Tridentinum*, V, 829.

[54] *Ibid.*, V, 512.

[55] *Ibid.*, V, 636.

[56] *Ibid.*, V, 700.

[57] *Ibid.*, V, 701.

discarding a superfluous *illa* and a slightly misleading *coram ipso*.[58]

The foregoing paragraphs are in agreement with, as far as it goes, an observation that Roach commits to a footnote, that "The Fathers at Trent chose '*unica*' to qualify '*formalis causa*' in order to obviate doctrines of two-fold justice."[59] In the same footnote, he goes on to say that "we do not explore these historical reasons for Trent's choice, but instead attempt a systematic interpretation."[60] The specific content of this "systematic interpretation" has already been indicated. I should like to conclude by raising the question of whether, or in what sense, this kind of "systematic interpretation" is properly called an interpretation at all.

The convictions and intentions that led the Council of Trent to adopt the phrase *unica formalis causa* are not obscure. Nowhere in the records of those convictions does one find any expression of conscious interest on the part of the Council in the idea of *unica formalis causa* that Roach is advocating. Nowhere in those records does one find any commitment of the Council to the scholastic premises (not universally shared even among scholastics) that Roach uses to infer the position he advocates from phrases in the conciliar text. Under the circumstances, it seems appropriate to ask whether Roach's modest statement is, after all, modest enough: "we must candidly acknowledge that Trent's teaching on the justice of God, objectively conceived, is ambiguous and by now historically a moot question."[61] Might it not be more candid to acknowledge that, about what Roach understands as "the justice of God, objectively conceived," Trent's "teaching" is not ambiguous, but simply nonexistent. That Trent should have no teaching on this particular topic would scarcely be surprising, for Trent had no reason to teach anything on the subject. It was not a contemporary issue, and conciliar teachings are responses to contemporary issues.

To discern such issues, and to appreciate their influence on events, is an historical task simply indispensable to the interpretation of conciliar teachings. Words and phrases that we find in conciliar texts may, of course, suggest to us any number of ideas, including some that the Council, for good or ill, neither thought about nor cared about. Ideas acquired in this way may be excellent ideas, highly interesting and profoundly true. But the elaboration

[58] *Ibid.*, V, 737.
[59] Roach, R., *art. cit.*, p. 205, n. 6.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 205, n. 6.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 187.

of such ideas is not the interpretation of that historical reality which is a conciliar text. And by the same token, the verification of such ideas, insofar as they become propositional, must be sought elsewhere than in an appeal to conciliar authority.

I certainly have no wish to deny that Trent's Decree on Justification is relevant to the pursuit of justice in this world. But I find no reason to suppose that its relevance is more or other than has been generally recognized in such statements as the following:

> The traditional Roman Catholic view is that of the Council of Trent, that justification is both an acquittal and a making righteous in the full ethical sense, thus embracing both relational and behavioural renewal. It means the sinner's forgiveness *and* his moral regeneration, i. e. his sanctification.[62]

That this being " righteous in the full ethical sense," this " behavioural renewal," this " moral regeneration," this " sanctification " should be detached in Roman Catholic *theology* from the pursuit of justice in this world seems to me, on a broad view of Catholic theological tradition, a genuine aberration. Which is not to say, however, that Catholic theological tradition tells us in any specific and reliable way *how* any of us is to pursue justice in this world, or *whether* all of us are to do so in quite the same way.

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[62] Ziesler, J. A. *op. cit.*, p. 2.

A NOTE ON THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE JUST WAR DOCTRINE

THE "JUST WAR DOCTRINE," one of the most original contributions of scholasticism to the history of political theory, and the chief source of international law in the West, attracts our interest not merely because of its importance in intellectual history. The increasing cosmopolitanism of our world fosters recurring attempts, by secular as well as Christian thinkers, to resuscitate the doctrine or at least to discover within it an acceptable basis from which to derive moral guidance for foreign and "national security" policy. But is not the scholastic notion of the just war, and all the prohibitions and prescriptions which follow from it, dependent on the acceptance of a specific, Christian revelation and therefore wholly unsuited to the contemporary situation? No: at least according to the authoritative transmitters of the Thomistic tradition, the great contribution of Thomas lies precisely in his reformulation of the Augustinian just war principles in such a way as to free them from any decisive dependence on the Christian dispensation. Our purpose here is not to discuss the specific details of the just war doctrine,[1] but rather to investigate this claim regarding the doctrine's theoretical foundation.

Adopting substantially the Augustinian views on war in the form they had been given in Gratian's *Decretum*, Thomas incorporates them into a general political theory based on a new, or much more systematic, idea of natural law. Let us recall here the terminology and outstanding features of Thomistic natural law, especially as contrasted with authentic Aristote-

[1] See my essay, "The Moral Basis of National Security: Four Historical Perspectives," Part II, in Klaus Knorr, ed., *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1976), pp. 317-332.

lian political theory. Thomas implies that, although natural law does not play a very important role in Aristotle's thought, such a notion provides the only real basis for his prescriptions about politics. The reason is this: in the *Ethics* Aristotle leaves unclear how men grasp the first principles of morality—the principles from which derive all the duties involved in each virtue that the political community aims to cultivate. Aristotle denies that these principles are based merely on convention or custom, he denies that they are inborn, and he refuses to say that they come from natural science or theoretical reason.[2] But he does not state unequivocally where they do come from.

Thomas supplies an answer by saying that certain laws or commandments (e. g. of the form "thou shalt not steal") are known to the human consciousness by means of a natural disposition or habit ("*habitus*") of which Aristotle had not spoken: *synderesis*, whose act is the "conscience." The "primary precepts" which comprise the natural law proper include commandments such as those found in the second table of the Ten Commandments. There are in addition "secondary precepts," which are the applications of the primary precepts to various circumstances: for instance, from the prohibition on theft is derived the secondary precept, "return all deposits." The secondary precepts may change in some circumstances; but the primary precepts never change and it is always wrong to violate them. (It may in some circumstances be right not to return a deposit, but it is never right to steal.)[3]

Both primary and secondary precepts together are contained in the "law of nations" (*ius gentium* or *consensus gentium*). For Thomas, the term "law of nations" does not then refer primarily to international law, and the difference between his usage and ours must be stressed, to avoid confusion. Following Cicero and the Stoics, Thomas intends by "law of nations"

[2] *Ethics* 1094b11-14, 1134b18-30, 1103a18-19, 1105b2-3; cf. 1095a30-b13 and 1144a6ff.

[3] *Commentary on the Ethics* 1017-18, 1023-25, 1028, and above all 1029; also 1072; *Summa Theologiae* I-II ques. 91, 93-95, II-II ques. 57 art. 2, 3. Cf. II-II ques. 66 art. 7.

not so much the law regulating relations *among* nations as the law commonly held by all civilized nations: for example, the law that theft is a punishable offense.[4]

The moral law is "natural" because it is known without divine intervention or revelation. It is also natural in the more important sense that its precepts are all derived from and aim at the development of those characteristics which define man's nature, his natural humanity as a familial, political, and rational being.

Thomas's interpretation goes beyond Aristotle not only in its legalism but in its categorical character. For Thomas, the imperatives of morality are not seen as means to some further end and they cannot therefore be changed for the sake of another end. One obeys the natural law not solely or even chiefly in order to gain something beyond it, but for its own sake, as an expression of one's deepest humanity, and therefore absolutely or categorically. Aristotle, on the other hand, in his only theoretical treatment of natural justice, does not hesitate to say that "while there is justice by nature, it is *all* changeable" (*Ethics* 1134b29-30). One is tempted to say that for Aristotle morality is in the final analysis not categorical but hypothetical, although he wished to leave this fact rather obscure. Morality, in short, would be not an end in itself but a means to earthly happiness, which happiness is at the least not identical with morality (cf. *Ethics* 1099a30ff and 1145a7-11).

At any rate, Thomas's famous formulation of the just war principles partakes fully of the legal and categorical tone missing in Aristotle's political thought: [5]

It must be stated that three things are required for any war to be just. First, of course, is the authority of an executive by whose command the war is to waged. For it does not belong to a private

[4] Cf. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1368b1-5; Ernest Nys, *Le droit de la guerre et les précurseurs de Grotius* (Brussels: Européene 1882), pp. 9-13; J. L. Brierly, *The Law of Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 17, 30; Coleman Phillipson, *The International Law and Custom of Ancient Greece and Rome*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1911), I, 70-85.

[5] *Summa Theologiae* II-II ques. 40 art. 1.

person to begin a war; he can pursue his right through the judgment of his superior.... In the second place, a just cause is required: namely, that those who are attacked deserve the attack on account of some wrongdoing of theirs, as Augustine says.... In the third place, it is required that the intention of those waging the war be right...

Thomas stresses the punitive character required of every just war even more than did Augustine; yet he gives very little indication of the criteria by which one may judge whether an offense deserving punishment has been committed. Nor does he explain what things can be taken as visible evidence of a just intention during the waging of war. It was the combination of the stringency of Thomas's demands and the amazing brevity of his treatment that led the most intelligent of his successors to elaborate at length on the principles which regulate just cause for war (*ius ad bellum*) and behavior in the prosecution of war (*ius in bello*). But why did the originator himself refrain from anything more than an adumbration of such a law of war?

When, in pursuing this question, we survey the whole of the *Summa Theologiae* and the place within it of the Question "On War," we are confronted with a surprising, and, alas, complicating fact. For although we were under the impression that the just war doctrine was part of the natural law teaching, it turns out that the treatment of the moral status of war does not occur in the context of the discussion of natural law, or of the law of nations, or of the virtue of justice. In fact, it is treated in the context of none of the natural virtues but rather within the discussion of the most "theological" or strictly Christian virtue of charity.[6] In the body of the Question on war, it is true, Thomas barely alludes to charity and refers often to justice and once even (in a quotation from Augustine)

[6] Cf. Msg. Bruno de Solages, *La théologie de la guerre juste* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1946), pp. 18-19, and Paul Ramsey, *The Just War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), pp. 206-7. In the course of Thomas's discussion, about forty-three references are made to various authorities. Of these only one, of minor importance, is to the philosopher Aristotle; the rest, except for one reference to Frontinus, are to religious authorities.

to the demands of the "natural order"; yet from the context it would seem that war appears as morally questionable in the *Summa* only when the author considers the demands of Christian love[7] (and even there Thomas raises the problem of war with a seeming reluctance).[8] In the light of Christian charity war is a sin: the crucial first article of the Question on war has the title, "Whether to wage war is *always* a sin." The response, as we have seen, speaks of the exceptional case where war is not a sin because it involves clearly intended punitive justice. But why is there no supplementary or preliminary discussion defining with precision the moral status of war from a simply natural, rational point of view?

The only sustained reference to war in the pages concerned with natural virtue occurs in the discussion of prudence, where Thomas devotes an article to showing that "military prudence" must be considered one of the four parts of this cardinal virtue (*Summa* II-II ques. 40 art. 4). Here, no allusion is made to punitive war or to any duty to the community of nations: the only purpose mentioned for military prudence is *defense* of the national common good. Could Thomas mean to imply that for men informed only by natural reason prior to Christian revelation just warfare is principally a matter of national defense, not punishment, and that the requirements of national security (which may include aggressive war, without a punitive justification, as a means to defense) pose problems mainly of military prudence rather than of justice? This might explain the brevity of his remarks on war and the failure to elaborate a natural law of war among the natural command-

[7] Thomas does treat the problem of booty, or robbery, in war within the section on justice, in the question on theft: II-II ques. 66 art. 8. It is noteworthy that peace, like war, is treated thematically not under the law of nations or under moral virtue or justice, but within the context of charity. Peace is the "work of justice" only "indirectly, insofar as justice removes the obstacles to peace; but it is the work of charity directly" (II-II ques. 29 art. 3).

[8] In Thomas's stated plan of the section on "the vices opposed to charity" no mention is made of any intention to treat the vice of war. The question regarding war thus comes as something of a surprise for the reader (see the prelude to ques. 34, and compare the preludes to ques. 37 and 39).

ments for just actions. But then why not make this structure of the argument explicit? And why appeal to justice and the "natural order" rather than to charity and divinely revealed law in the body of his discussion of war? Why, in short, does this great reasoner blur the distinction between what is commanded by natural law and what is commanded by divine law?

There is no simple answer to all these questions.[9] One wonders, however, whether what we witness here is not an indication that war and relations among nations is the sphere of politics where Thomas's attempt to reconcile Christian ethics and natural reason proves most tenuous. Thomas maintains the existence of a naturally sanctioned order of justice among nations, an order resembling in imperfect form the natural political order within each nation. But his own reasoning power compels him to make this assertion only within a Christian context—in a discussion whose moral premises admit the authority of Christian revelation. This implies that the source of the just war doctrine in Thomas is not natural law, but divine law. Thomas seems silently to confess his inability to demonstrate by natural reason any clear basis for the international moral order whose existence he asserts. He appears to use the idea of natural justice as a rhetorical weapon in the first tentative steps of a campaign to widen and deepen moral restraints on foreign policy in all nations.[10] At the same time, his rhetoric combats on the other flank a profoundly pacifistic tendency in Christianity.[11] By blurring, in his discussion of war, the

[9] For a full consideration, it would be necessary to reflect also on the references to war in II-II ques. 10 art. 8, ques. 42 art. 2 ad 1, ques. 64 art. 3 ad 1, ques. 64 art. 7, ques. 123 art. 5.

[10] This would provide a basis for the impression sustained by Paul Ramsey in his consideration of the just war doctrine: *War and the Christian Conscience* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1961), esp. pp. xviii-xix and 42-4. Unfortunately Ramsey's discussion of the tradition is marred by insufficient attention to the considerable difference between Augustine's political theology and the natural law tradition stemming from Thomas: see esp. *The Just War*, *op. cit.*, pp. xiii, 7, 150 (but cf. p. 386).

[11] For the original pacifism of the Christian Church, and the continuing impetus to reassert—against Thomas—that pacifism, see Roland Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), esp. pp.

difference between Christian and natural law precepts, Thomas not only elevates natural law to make it embrace part of the restrictions commanded by charity; he also lowers or dilutes charity to make it more tolerant of war. To make charity more influential among statesmen he makes it more reasonable or "realistic," while to turn statesmen more charitable he tries to persuade them to accept a more "idealistic," or Christian, version of the rational, natural limits on war and foreign policy.

Whatever Thomas's intention, in succeeding centuries his followers have assumed that the doctrine of the just war is based on natural law.[12] The most important contributors to the scholastic project of elaborating a full "law of war" were Vitoria and Suarez. In Suarez's treatment, and especially in his endeavor to correct and perfect Vitoria, we can discern most sharply the historical outcome of the theoretical problem or ambiguity we found in Thomas.

Suarez was dissatisfied with Vitoria's manner of conceiving the relation between natural law and the notion of the just war. Suarez agreed that the norms or laws of war must be part of the "law of nations." But he insisted on making explicit the new notion of an international law of nations to which Vitoria had implicitly appealed: [13]

Let me add for greater clarification that something is said to belong to the law of nations in two ways (so far as I can gather from Isidore and other jurists and authorities): in one way, because it is a law that all people and the diverse nations ought to follow

57-63, 66-84, 88-9, and Joan Tooke, *The Just War in Aquinas and Grotius* (London: *Op. Cit.*, pp. xiii, 7, 150 (but cf. p. 386).

[12] See, for example, Vitoria, *Commentary on the Second Part of the Second Part of the Summa Theologiae of Thomas Aquinas* ad ques. 40 art. 1, #6; Suarez, *On the Three Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, On Charity* XIII (hereafter cited as *On Charity*), ii 1, iii 1, v 6; de Solages, pp. 18, 54, 58; Robert Regout, *La doctrine de la guerre juste de St. Augustin à nos jours* (Paris: Pedone, 1936), p. 125; Emile Chenon, "St. Thomas d'Aquin et la guerre," in P. Battifol et al., *L'église et le droit de guerre* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1920), p. 89; Heinrich Rommen, *The State in Catholic Thought* (St. Louis: Herder, 1945), pp. 619, 623-5, 633-7, but contrast 708. Compare Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, pp. 45-6.

[13] *On Laws and God the Lawgiver* (hereafter cited as *On Laws*) II xix 8.

in their external relations with one another; in another way because it is a law that individual cities or realms observe internally but which on account of general resemblance and conformity is also called the law of nations. The former way seems to me to preserve the law of nations as something in itself, distinct from the civil law, in accordance with our explication here of the law of nations.

As a result of having clarified the meaning of the international type of law of nations, Suarez feels compelled to make sharper the distinction between natural law and this law of nations proper. The international "laws of nations" are man-made customs derived by nations from the premises of natural reason, as conclusions which are appropriate but not absolutely necessary; in contrast, natural laws are laws independent of man's making, and derived from the premises of natural reason as conclusions which are inescapably necessary (*On Laws* II xvii-xx). Now Thomas had in one key passage said the same thing (*Summa* I-II ques. 95 art. 4); but he had also allowed himself to blur any distinction between natural law and the law of nations (*Ibid.*, reply to obj. 1, and II-II ques. 57 art. 3). Thomas refused to be pedantic in this matter because he, unlike Suarez and Vitoria, identified the law of nations principally with certain civil or domestic laws, and he was sure that just as the city or polity is by nature necessary, so there are certain laws which are by nature necessary within every polity (such as those punishing murder and theft). Vitoria had followed Thomas in sometimes blurring the distinction between natural law and the law of nations,[14] but he did it while speaking principally of *international* law. He could do this because he was convinced that just as polities and their domestic laws are necessary, so there is necessarily a world political order with its own laws, which include the law of punitive war as their sanction. Suarez cannot bring himself to this conviction, and hence steps back to a notion of a less natural and necessary, more conventional, international law.

When we probe Vitoria to learn whence comes his assurance

[14] *Theological Lessons* V, "On the Indians Lately Discovered," iii 1, 2 and *Theological Lessons* VI, "On the Law of War," 19.

that certain international laws are as permanent and necessary as many civil laws, we discover that the assurance is based on the claim that there has existed in the historical past ("after the first time of the creation or after the recovery from the flood"[15]) a world government, and that the present law of nations is to be considered the legitimate remnant of that world government: "the world as a whole is in a way one single state. . ." (*On Civil Power* 21 end). The world is, as it were, a city which has by accident become disorganized. But this historical evidence comes not, as Vitoria in the context tries to assert, from natural reason but from revealed scripture (and from a controversial reading at that: consider *Genesis* 11: 1-9). Vitoria in the final analysis fails to create a coherent *natural* law basis for international law.

Suarez's reservations are then perfectly intelligible. But what grounding does Suarez himself give the law of nations? For Vitoria no nation can withhold obedience from the law of nations because that law, like civil law, is not a product of an implicit pact among the nations but derives from the majority decision of an original nation of all men under one world government; it can therefore be abrogated only unanimously or by another such government (*On Civil Power* 21). For Suarez the law of nations is, unlike civil law, an implicit contract among the nations; once entered into, it cannot be broken without mutual consent, but it is conceivable that a nation has not entered into it: "natural right does not oblige [a nation to enter into commercial ties], for it might be possible for a commonwealth to live by itself and not wish to carry on commerce with others, even with no unfriendliness involved" (*On Laws* II xix 7; cf. xx 7-9). Is this not a challenge to the moral necessity of the world legal order, and to the punitive war which sanctions that order? Doubtless Suarez follows Vitoria in devoting many pages to defining and clarifying every aspect of punitive war. And yet at one point he raises the possibility

[15] "On the Indians," iii 4; cf. iii 1; Theological Lessons III, "On Civil Power," 14 (end), 21 (end).

of an international law which had no notion of punitive war or international legal sanctions. He remarks that such a possibility is "in the same class as slavery"—which, though not necessarily prohibited according to natural law, has been abolished in the *Christian* law of nations (*On Laws* II xix 8). Suarez is obviously aware that among the ancients enslavement of prisoners was part of the international consensus. Is he not equally aware that there is little evidence of a consensus among the ancients regarding the existence and content of a punitive international law (*On Charity* vii 9, 22)?[16] Suarez succeeds only in making manifest the dubious link between natural law, at least as understood by Thomas, and the just war doctrine.

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[16] At one point Suarez goes so far as to admit that Thomas's third criterion for a just war, purity of intention, is a duty of charity only, and cannot be held a duty of natural justice (*On Charity* vii 21).

POWER IN AQUINAS

THE POWER OF PERSONS, the power I have, for example, to move the book that is on the desk before me, is usually thought to differ from the powers of other things, for example, the power boiling water has to poach an egg, in this that should certain conditions be met the boiling water will poach an egg, while should the same sort of conditions be met in my case I *can* exercise the power I have to move a book but I need not. In the case of non-persons, the power and conditions suffice for the exercise of the power; in the case of persons, the power and conditions are necessary but not sufficient for the exercise of the power.

While this difference between the power of persons and the powers of things has often been noted, most recently by Harré and Madden,[1] little attention has been paid to another difference between the powers of persons and the powers of things which, as I see it, accounts for the sufficient conditions for the exercise of the one kind of power differing from the sufficient conditions for the exercise of the other.

We can get at what constitutes this important difference between the power of persons and the power of things by considering what St. Thomas Aquinas has to say about power when in his *Summa Theologiae* he discusses the question, "*Utrum in Deo sit Potentia.*"[2]

In inquiring "*Utrum in Deo sit Potentia,*" St. Thomas is not wondering whether there is anything potential in God. He has already settled the issue of whether there is in God a capacity to be changed or modified,[3] and he has repeated his negative

[1] R. Harré and E. H. Madden, *Causal Powers: A Theory of Natural Necessity*, 1975 (Basil Blackwell, Oxford), pp. 86-87.

[2] I, 25, 1.

[3] I, 3, 1: "*Impossibile est igitur quod in Deo sit aliquid in potentia.*" In this line, 'potentia' does not mean power but capacity to be changed, modified, altered, or affected.

answer at least once.[4] He is asking, rather, whether power can be present in God. The question arises for St. Thomas not because the Latin term '*potentia*' has a sense incompatible with God's actuality, perfection, and completeness, but because, even when it means power, it appears to refer to something incompatible with God's actuality, perfection, and completeness.

This is obviously the case for St. Thomas when '*potentia*' refers to a passive power, for, as he sees it, an agent the power of which is passive must first be "turned on" by something else if it is to exercise its power.[5] God, after all, cannot suffer the action of something else, nor need He suffer the action of something else in order to exercise His power. To say the same thing in another way, the presence in a thing of a passive power implies there is something potential in it, and there can be nothing potential in God.

Yet St. Thomas's conclusion that active power alone can be present in God ("*Relinquitur ergo quod in Deo maxime sit potentia activa*")[6] must be interpreted with care, for active power, at least in the sense in which it is often understood, can imply the presence of something potential. While an agent the power of which is active need not be "turned on" by something else in order to exercise its power,[7] such powers can often be distinguished from the actions they enable agents to perform, not to mention the effects they enable agents to produce.[8] When this is the case, the action, according to St. Thomas, is nobler than the power ("*Dicendum quod quandocumque actus est aliud a potentia, oportet quod actus sit nobilior potentia*"),[9] and the action can be compared to the

[4] I, 3, 6.

[5] I, 77, 3: "*Obiectum autem comparatur ad actum potentiae passivae, sicut principium et causa movens; . . .*"

[6] I, 25, 1.

[7] I, 77, 3: "*Ad actum autem potentiae activae comparatur obiectum ut terminus et finis.*"

[8] Obviously a man's power to lift a weight differs from his act of lifting, since he is sometimes not lifting, and from the motion of the weight.

[9] I, 25, 1, ad 2.

power as actuality to potentiality.[10] Since an agent with an active power of this kind *can* be acting but need not be, there is something potential in agents of this kind, and such a power, though active, is also incompatible with the actuality, perfection, and completeness of God.

If active power, as well as passive power, can imply the presence in an agent of something potential, one can easily understand why St. Thomas raises and discusses the question of power in God.

In saying "*Relinquitur ergo quod in Deo maxime sit potentia activa,*" St. Thomas does not understand God's active power to be like the power we have just described. Quite the contrary, for him, God's power is identical with His action ("*Sed actio non est aliud ab eius potentia*").[11] This means, of course, that God's power is not a principle or source of His action (*potentia non dicitur in Deo sicut principium actionis*).[12] It is, however, as St. Thomas sees it, a principle or source of the effects God produces by His action (*potentia non dicitur in Deo sicut principium actionis, sed sicut principium facti*).[13] That the action itself of a thing be a power is not incompatible with St. Thomas's understanding of power. For him, 'power' can refer either to a source or principle of action; a power, in other words, can be a capacity for action, or a source or principle of an effect, namely, the action or activity of a thing which can be productive of an effect ("*Dicendum quod potentia in rebus creatis non solum est principium actionis, sed etiam effectus*").[14] It is because St. Thomas thinks that actions capable of producing effects are powers that he can attribute power to God. He puts the point this way:

Dicendum quod potentia in rebus creatis non solum est principium actionis, sed etiam effectus. Sic igitur in Deo salvatur ratio

[10] I, 54, 1: "*Actio enim est proprie actualitas virtutis; sicut esse est actualitas substantiae vel essentiae.*"

[11] I, 25, 1 ad 2.

[12] *Summa Contra Gentiles,* II, 10.

[13] *Idem.*

[14] I, 25, 1 ad 1.

potentiae quantum ad hoc, quod est principium effectus; non autem quantum ad hoc, quod est principium actionis, quae est divina essentia. Nisi forte secundum modum intelligendi, prout divina essentia, quae in se simpliciter praehabet quidquid perfectionis est in rebus creatis, potest intelligi et sub ratione actionis, et sub ratione potentiae; sicut etiam intelligitur et sub ratione suppositi habentis naturam, et sub ratione naturae. Sic igitur in Deo salvatur ratio potentiae quantum ad hoc, quod est principium effectus.[15]

When St. Thomas uses the term 'potentia' and has in mind power, he can be thinking either of an active power or of a passive power. As he puts it, power is twofold (*duplex est potentia*).[16] Yet, as we have noted, he thinks there are two kinds of active powers, those not identical with the actions of which they are the source, let us call these 'dispositional powers', and those that are actions; these latter, of course, are not identical with the effects of which they are the source.[17] As we have seen, St. Thomas thinks there is at least one power of the latter kind, namely, God's power.

While St. Thomas has special reason for thinking that power and action are identical in God (the reason being that in God His action is identical with His essence and with Him, and it is is not possible that His action have a source or principle since it is not possible that there be a source or principle of Him), this does not mean, without special proof, that he is committed to the view that action and power can be identical *only* in God. It may very well be the case that he thinks that the action (activities) of bodies is their power to produce effects.

Should we adopt the suggestion of Aquinas and think of the powers of things as their actions or activities and of the powers

[15] I, 25, 1 ad 3.

[16] I, 25, 1.

[17] Although actions are sometimes confused with the effects of which they are the source or cause, they need not be. They are also sometimes thought to be the actions they are in virtue of the effects that result from them. For Aquinas, however, action is neither essentially productive nor essentially non-productive and neither powers nor actions are relative. For a defense and explanation of this view of action in Aquinas see my "Action in Aquinas," *The New Scholasticism*, LII (Spring, 1978), pp. 261-267.

of persons as their capacities to perform actions, we will still be able to speak about the exercise of either kind of power, yet the word 'exercise' in each case will refer to something quite different, and this difference will account for the sufficient conditions for the exercise of the one kind of power differing from the sufficient conditions for the exercise of the other.

When we attribute a power to a person or a thing, we look forward, in some sense, to the exercise of the power. In the case of the power boiling water has to poach an egg, we look forward to a change of an obvious kind in the state of an egg. In the case of a person's power to move the book on the desk before him, while we look forward to a change in the position of a book, we look forward also to something else. If I am going to exercise the power I have to move the book on the desk before me, I am going to have to do something I am not now doing, say move my hand and arm, for I can effect changes in other things only if I perform an action. When we ascribe the power to move a book to a person, we look forward to a change in the position of a book *and* to an action of that person. We look forward, in other words, to that person's doing something he is not now doing. But when we ascribe to boiling water the power to poach an egg, we do not look forward to the boiling water doing something it is not now doing if it is to exercise its power to poach an egg. In the case of a person, the exercise of his power will involve at least the performance of an action, an action which will differ both from the effect which may result from it, say a change in the position of a book, and from the power which enables the person to perform the action. In the case of a thing, the exercise of its power will not involve an action or activity but a result of its action or activity, say a change in the state of an egg, a change which is different from the power (action or activity) that produces it.

When we ascribe powers to things, as opposed to persons, we appear to be talking about their actions (activities) with a view toward what will result from these activities (actions)

should certain conditions be met, while when we ascribe power to a person, as opposed to things, we appear to be talking about a capacity for action with a view toward the performance of an action and, in at least some cases, what will result from the performance of such an action.

When ' power ' refers to an action or activity, as it does when we ascribe power to a thing, that " power " and certain conditions suffice for the " exercise " of that " power ", i. e. suffice for the production of an effect. On the other hand, when ' power ' refers to a capacity for action, as it does when we ascribe power to a person, we should not be surprised to find that that " power " and the conditions spoken of above do not suffice for the " exercise " of that " power ". This should not surprise us, for why should anyone have ever thought that what suffices for an action or activity to have an effect should suffice for the exercise of a capacity for action?

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AETERNI PATRIS: 1879-1979

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AMERICAN RESPONSES

PROFESSOR MARCIA COLISH has observed that "Of all the chapters in the history of post-medieval Thomism the one initiated by the Leonine revival has been the least thoroughly investigated."[1] The purpose of this bibliography is to provide students of the history of Thomism with a guide to the response of the U.S. press and selected American philosophers to *Aeterni Patris*.

NEWSPAPERS. Announcements of the encyclical—occasionally with comments— can be found in the following: *The Catholic Telegraph* of Cincinnati (September 4, 1879), *The Catholic Vindicator* of Milwaukee (September, 13, 1879), *The Catholic Mirror* of Baltimore (September 6, 1879), *The Boston Pilot* (September 6, 1879), and *The Notre Dame Scholastic* (August 23, 1879).

JOURNALS. Favorable responses included: James Corcoran, "The Recent Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII on the Necessity of Reinstating the Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas in Catholic Schools," *American Catholic Quarterly Review* 4 (1879), 719-732; "Leo XIII On Scholastic Philosophy," *Catholic World* 30 (1879), 289-298; T. J. Jenkins, "The Angel of the Schools on the Virgin Mother," *Ave Maria* 16 (1880), 601-605, 621-625; "The Intellectual Outlook of the Age," *Catholic World* 31 (1880), 145-158. Two critical responses by non-Catholics were: Archibald Alexander, "Thomas Aquinas and the Encyclical Letter," *Princeton Review* 5 (1880), 245-261; Austin Bierbower, "The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas," *The New Englander* 42 (1883), 86-102. Two Catholic responses to these criticisms were: "*The Princeton Review* and Leo XIII," *Catholic World* 31 (1880), 380-395, 521-535; "St. Thomas in the *New Englander* for January, 1883," *Catholic World* 37 (1883), 68-82.

[1] "St. Thomas in Historical Perspective: The Modern Period," *Church History* 44 (1975), 445.

COMMENTS BY SOME AMERICAN PHILOSOPHERS. Thomas Davidson, prefatory remarks to a letter printed as " the Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 13 (1879), 87-88; review of *Institutiones Philosophiae Naturalis* by Tilmannus Pesch, *Mind: a Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy* 7 (1882), 428-427; *The Philosophical System of Antonio Rosmini-Serbati* (London, 1882), esp. p. 96. John Dewey, " The Scholastic and the Speculator," [1891] in *John Dewey: The Early Works*, eds. Jo Ann Boydston et al., 5 vols. (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1969-72), 3: 149. William James, " Philosophy and Its Critics," in *Some Problems in Philosophy: A Beginning of an Introduction to Philosophy* (New York, 1911), p. 12. C. S. Peirce, " The Principles of Philosophy," in *The Collected Works of Charles Sanders Peirce*, eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1931-34), 1: 10-14, 356. Josiah Royce, introduction to Edward van Becelaere, *La Philosophie en Amerique...* (New York, 1904), xvi.

SECONDARY ACCOUNTS. Charles Hart, " Neo-Scholastic Philosophy in American Catholic Culture," in *Aspects of New Scholastic Philosophy*, ed. Charles Hart (New York, 1932), pp. 10-31; Jesse A. Mann, " Neo-Scholastic Philosophy in the United States of America in the Nineteenth Century," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 33 (1959), 127-136: Joseph Louis Perrier, *The Revival of Scholastic Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1909), pp. 232-244; James A. Weisheipl, " Contemporary Scholasticism," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* 15 vols. (New York, 1967-74), 12: 1170. Marcia L. Colish, " St. Thomas in Historical Perspective: The Modern Period," *Church History* 44 (1975), 433-449 considers *Aeterni Patris* pp. 434-436, 445-449.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Original Sin: Two Major Trends in Contemporary Roman Catholic Reinterpretation. By G. VANDERVELDE. Amsterdam, Rodopi N. V., 1975. Pp. 350.

Vendervelde, a member of the Reformed Church, wrote this richly rewarding book initially as a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Professor G. C. Berkouwer at the Free University in Amsterdam. What we have here is an in-depth study of two main currents in the contemporary Catholic reinterpretations of original sin, specifically original sin as it is in men and women of historical time rather than Adam. In a long introduction the author outlines the background of the present flood of theological literature that has come from Catholic theologians on this subject since the early 1960's. He surveys the history of the doctrine from the patristic period. And he makes special note that in the post-tridentine Catholic world original sin has been generally understood in a negative sense, that is, as a privation of sanctifying grace inherited through generation by all the descendants of Adam and Eve. This negative understanding of original sin is different from that of Augustine, who associated original sin and concupiscence closely and understood this sin as an active rebellion against God. In recent decades there are aspects of our culture and the Church's stance toward it that have called the traditional view into question. The modern scientific understanding of man within an evolutionary framework stands in contrast to the pre-modern static understanding of human origins. For example, evolution calls into question monogenism and the perfections traditionally ascribed to Adam and Eve before the fall. Moreover, new views on Scripture and its literary forms call into question the realistic interpretations of the first chapters of Genesis that were traditional for Catholic theologians. John XXIII's call for reinterpretations of Catholic doctrines that preserve their substance but modify their expression to make them understandable to people of our time has had particular significance for original sin. From the enormous amount of literature that has emerged on this topic, Vandervelde studies thoroughly the reinterpretations of original sin as man's situation by some theologians (Piet Schoonenberg, Karl Rahner, and Karl-Heinz Weger) and as personal sin by others (Alfred Vanneste and Urs Baumann). He evaluates these interpretations in the course of his book, and in the epilogue he sums up the problems associated with these views and suggests a possible perspective on this doctrine. We will indicate central points in the successive

parts of his book and then develop a bit further the perspective he suggests.

Among the *situationists* there is a real community of thought, even though the differences are significant. Schoonenberg, the pioneer here in reinterpreting original sin, makes use in part of Rahner's anthropology; and Weger is largely a follower of Rahner. Schoonenberg attempts to replace the notion of heredity in the doctrine of original sin with that of situation. He finds that Scripture affirms both human solidarity in sin (for example, in the "sin of the world") and personal responsibility, although it does not sufficiently work out the distinction between communal sin and personal sin. Schoonenberg adopts the notion of situation as central for the purpose of relating the sin of one person to that of others without the implication of guilt. The situationists' reinterpretation of original sin depends upon an underlying anthropology and a specific manner of relating nature and grace. This anthropology explains man by the coexistence of socio-historical situation and personal freedom, and their interaction. Rahner specifies that what constitutes man's nature is self-transcendence toward an absolute horizon. This transcendence occurs, however, within spatio-temporal dimensions. Man expresses or objectifies his transcendence within these dimensions; and this context involves factors, some of which are alienating, that man must appropriate freely in the process of his self-transcendence. Situation for all three theologians is an *Existential* that intrinsically determines man, while it is distinct from the core of the person, namely, his freedom. There never was, however, a *natura pura*, for God wants all men to be saved, a desire that has as its effect in men what Rahner calls the supernatural existential. This constitutes all history as salvation history, a history that is understood in an evolutionary framework, with three concentrated phases: Israel, Jesus, and the Church.

With this background, their interpretation of original sin can be understood and evaluated. These theologians adopt the understanding of original sin as the privation of sanctifying grace that has been common teaching among Catholic theologians since Trent. But they understand this as a situational privation. That is, men are in a situation where other men mediate sin to them rather than the grace that God had intended them to mediate. To explain this, Schoonenberg uses as a model the situation of a child born into a family that makes its living by theft or prostitution. This situation renders the child incapable of living a life of purity and honesty. Similarly the sin of the world makes men incapable of supernatural love and even of natural love (because the latter involves accepting God who in fact offers man grace). Thus we can be said to have guilt through original sin only by an analogy of extrinsic attribution; that is, the situation that encompasses all men leads to sin and comes from sin.

Rahner interprets the guilt of original sin as due to the fact that men are born in a condition of unholiness that is counter to God's will, since God had intended grace to be mediated to men by the spatio-temporal dimension in which they live.

Vandervelde questions whether this interpretation articulates different aspects central to the doctrine of original sin. Because of the firm differentiation that these theologians make between situation and man's personal freedom, their identification of original sin with situation seems to remove it from the moral or religious sphere for the subject. It removes the character of guilt from original sin in us, since situation is in specific contradistinction from freedom. The author also questions whether this theory accounts for the impulse toward sin that original sin is traditionally held to constitute, even though the three theologians do develop the notion of concupiscence. As the point from which to evaluate this situationist reinterpretation, Vandervelde is here using something more akin to Augustine's notion of original sin than to the negative evaluation of this sin as privation. He also finds that this reinterpretation has difficulty in accounting for the universality of original sin, since man's situation is ambiguous; it involves acts of love as well as of sin. Schoonenberg seems to have acknowledged a validity to such a criticism by the twists and turns present in different stages of his reinterpretation. This criticism may not touch Rahner as much, since he attributes a special significance to the sin at the beginning of history which, he holds, can affect us without the postulate of monogenism. Vandervelde questions the noetic basis for Rahner's assertion of the universality of original sin. In fact, he ascribes this assertion of universality to a kind of positivism in these theologians, namely the " axiom that the sacramental Church is the unique and necessary agent of sanctifying grace " (241). Since baptism mediates sanctifying grace, original sin is universal. This appears to Vandervelde to involve circular reasoning.

Vandervelde then examines some current Catholic reinterpretations of original sin as *personal sin.* A. Vanneste rejects the notion of original sin as some kind of pre-personal sinfulness. He demythologizes the statement in the second canon of the Council of Carthage that baptism effects in infants a remission of sin by stating that the main point of Augustine in his controversy with the Pelagians was that all adults are sinners. Theology cannot say anything significant about infants. What theology can say is that all human beings as they become adult will sin in their first moral act. In this sense all are sinners and need Christ's redeeming grace. Similarly, Vanneste demythologizes the historical Adam's primordial fall, monogenism and the inheritance of sin from Adam; history is in his view the conglomerate of man's individual acts. With Vanneste, U. Baumann rejects an understanding of original sin as " pre-personal, analogical sinful-

ness" (289), and understands it as personal sin, although he insists more on the depth of personal sin than on its universality. For him the ultimate and only validity of the doctrine is the "unconditional validity of the *sola gratia* (quality) of God's saving acts" (290) counter to the Pelagians. It is the depth of grace that reveals the abyss of sin; and because of the personal character of sin, man is responsible for his fallenness. The traditional doctrine of original sin served some purpose, for it was a counterbalance to the dominant moralistic Catholic view of man and sin, although it lost "the message of the Biblical Adam for the present" (299) in its immediacy. This immediacy is defended by an existential interpretation of original sin rather than by an historical, evolutionary or situational interpretation. That is, original sin refers to the depth of sin in each one of us; sin's root is in our freedom without being due to some other beginning, as in an historical Adam.

In his epilogue, Vandervelde summarizes the difficulties that he has with these two trends in contemporary Catholic theology and suggests a possible perspective for access to the mystery of original sin. He has difficulty with the situationists' excessively negative interpretation of original sin as privation of grace. Difficulties with this conception are made deeper since these theologians interpret this privation as due to a situation that is strictly distinguished from personal freedom. The result of this is that original sin is divorced from the subject's religious stance toward God. Vandervelde holds on the contrary that original sin is not only a privation or an incapacity to love God; it is also some deep unwillingness in us to love God or, as Augustine called it, a rebellion against God. The negative situational interpretation does not do justice to the guilt character of original sin. Vandervelde thinks that both Schoonenberg and Rahner are in their interpretation of Scripture dominated by a post-tridentine 'theologoumenon' about original sin. This is not to say that Vandervelde finds Vanneste's and Baumann's starting point in personal freedom and personal sin satisfactory. While Vanneste holds that one cannot say anything theologically meaningful about children, he predicts with absolute foreknowledge that all will sin in their first morally adult act. And Baumann denies the possibility of any theological reflection beyond the fact of personal sin or individual decision. For both, freedom almost becomes fate. Actually, the doctrine of original sin is "in essence a confession... of one's original enslavement in sin and one's consequent need of radical redemption in Jesus Christ" (326). To articulate this we need an "awareness of the integral historical unity of mankind to which the scriptural view of man's solidarity in sin and salvation as well as the ecclesiastical doctrine of original sin bear witness," but such an awareness "is lacking in both the personal and the situational reinterpretation of original sin" (326). While Vandervelde finds some help toward an interpretation of

original sin in work such as that of J. Smulders and P. Ricoeur, he finds that neither the situationists nor the personalists nor both together really contribute to the perspective we need for an adequate development of the doctrine of original sin in our time.

I would like to extend somewhat the possible perspective that Vandervelde suggests as fruitful for a reinterpretation of original sin, namely the recognition that it is based on the solidarity of humanity in sin and salvation and that it is in essence a confession. One aspect of this doctrine most difficult for people to accept is its implication that I am held to be guilty because of another's sin. Both the personalists' and the situationists' interpretations try to deal with this difficulty, the one by identifying it with personal sin and the other by distinguishing it radically from the personal. This preoccupation with the personal in the question of guilt or sin is characteristic of the modern age that has considered individual persons atomistically as directing their lives by their own experience and freedom. But it is probably also a misreading of what Scripture meant by the teachings later articulated in the doctrine of original sin and of man's solidarity with the community of men. The analogue for our understanding of original sin in us should not be personal sin but the sin of the community.

Israel had experience of such sin and acknowledged its presence. For example, the Exile was seen as a punishment for the sins of the community, and the people generally confessed their guilt for these sins of the community even when they were not personally guilty. These communal sins did not occur without the presence of personal sins, particularly on the part of the leaders and representatives of the people. The consequences of these communal sins lasted for generations, and Jews generally felt called upon to ask God's forgiveness for the sins of their people. It is somewhat on this model that in the New Testament the evangelists recalled Jesus's predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem and Paul explained the blindness that had fallen on the Jews; these were understood to be punishments because the people or community did not acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This situation led to a structure and dynamism in the Jewish community that actively inclined people to reject Jesus as the Christ. In writing of this in *Romans* 9-11, Paul in no way asserted that individual Jews lost their eternal salvation because of this communal sin, because he recognized that each one would be judged personally. This situation is not unique to Israel, for we can see through history how we are linked together and how, for good and evil, we are affected by the decisions of others in our societies and particularly by decisions of our representatives and leaders. We are all parts of a community. As a community God has expectations of us at particular points of history, and we are treated by God as parts of a community and not only as individual free persons.

The situation is deeper and more universal than one which occurs within particular historical communities, and so it calls for an articulation that goes beyond individual communities to embrace the whole of humanity. The situation of all men seemed to Israel much like its own in exile—some degree of alienation from God. This could not have been the intent of God, whose goodness Israel had experienced. It must be due to communal sins that embraced all men and brought disaster upon all. The understanding of the significance of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus was in a context not simply of personal sins but of the breadth and depth of sin that embraces all. The liberation he offered was essential for men implicated in communal sins whether of their individual communities or of the community of mankind, as well as for their enslavement by personal sins. This is not a doctrine that depends essentially upon physical generation nor upon the details of the picture of man's intimacy with God that we have in the first chapters of Genesis.

What we are suggesting then as a possible perspective is that original sin is a reality within us through our being a part of mankind in the present order of existence. As part of mankind we participate in the sin of mankind. While its effects and reality are most evident in the adult in whom it has had free reign, original sin is a reality in the infant. This is in the infant a privation of consecration to God and a root of man's rebellion against God. Perhaps the new rite of Baptism lends some support to this perspective, since what original sin is has frequently been illumined by what Baptism confers. In the new rite it is stressed that faith and Baptism confer consecration to God through incorporation of the person into the people of God. Similarly, it liberates the person from identification with the community of mankind as alienated from God and from the lack of holiness and root of rebellion against God that man participates from this identification. Without further elaboration of this perspective, we may note that this interpretation agrees with the personalists that original sin in us is something that we confess, and with the situationists that it is not personal sin.

This perspective has significance for our lives in the late twentieth century. There are many who think that the basic weakness of our society is that we are not sufficiently aware that we are responsible for more than our own individual lives or our own little communities. Actually, we are parts or members of societies of lesser or greater extent in the world, and we are responsible for these societies. The meaning of our lives is not exhausted by our individual success or salvation; the welfare of the community is an essential horizon for our lives and their meaning. This realization can be distorted by a kind of 'guilt mongering,' but there is truth in it nevertheless. Nor are we free from guilt and the effects of this guilt if our communities fail seriously to meet God's expectations in a

particular period of history, even though this may not be personal guilt. The doctrine of original sin is difficult to accept in our time not simply because of distortions of it in history or because of adjustments that must be made to relate it to the modern understanding of man's development as evolutionary but also because of the individualism that is so deeply ingrained in men of our time and that stands in opposition to the acceptance of this mystery.

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The Piety of Thinking. By MARTIN HEIDEGGER. Translated with an Introduction by James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1976. $10.95.

The *Piety of Thinking* contains translations of four essays by Martin Heidegger and a formal report of a "Conversation with Martin Heidegger," with extensive and very helpful notes on the texts. The translators, James Hart and John Maraldo, also provide a lengthy commentary on the themes covered in the essays and on Heidegger's thought in general. I shall discuss the four essays in order, considering the "Conversation" in conjunction with the second of these, and finally I shall turn to the translators' commentary.

1. "Phenomenology and Theology" is an address given by Heidegger in 1927 and again in 1928 and slightly reworked prior to its publication in 1969. Thus its conception roughly coincides with that of *Being and Time* and *Kant and the Problems of Metaphysics,* early works which manifest Heidegger's struggle to find clarity with regard to the question of Being. It is an attempt to define the relationship between theology and philosophy. Heidegger concludes by clarifying the fundamental differences between the two and by enjoining cooperation between the two within the "community of sciences."

Heidegger in this essay characterizes theology as a positive science which has faith as its object. Theology is a positive science in the sense that it attempts the conceptualization and demonstration of its *positum,* faith. Faith is both the motivation and the object of theology; thus theology is understood as *fides quaerens intellectum.*

Kierkegaard's influence upon Heidegger becomes visible in the understanding of faith that Heidegger proffers. Faith names a believing existence, a "rebirth," a "faith-full existence." The science of theology concerns itself with "subjective truths"; it is an analysis of a specific kind of

existence. God is only mentioned in passing in this essay. Heidegger notes that etymologically theology means the science of God. He comments that traditionally theology studies the relationship between God and man. But he rejects these notions of theology for his own. Theology is Christian theology whose object is Christian faith.

Philosophy, by contrast to theology, is the science of Being, Ontology. As in Heidegger's other early works, Being is a transcendental concept by which the totality of beings is grasped; Being is the ontological ground concept. That notion of Being tended to be unworkable in Heidegger's developing efforts to rethink Being more radically. His success at this rethinking gives clarity by contrast; his later reflections on these early statements about Being amount almost to retractions. He includes his own works among those which must be overcome because they are metaphysical and unable to think Being.

As *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* points out, ontology can become possible only after the foundation for metaphysics is established. This effort Heidegger terms "fundamental ontology," which is the basic theme of *Being and Time*. The phenomenological analysis of *Dasein*'s being functions as an analogy according to which the Being of beings can be known. The phenomenological method is employed by Heidegger in service of the task of fundamental ontology; it makes possible a demonstration that ontological knowledge of Being is possible. This same notion of phenomenology obtains in "Phenomenology and Theology:" "Phenomenology is always the name for the procedure of ontology, which essentially distinguished itself from all other positive sciences" (p. 21).

From this it follows that philosophy is understood as the phenomenological analysis of *Dasein* in service of the question of Being. Philosophy is neither a positive nor an ontic science; its "object" is Being, which is neither given nor a being. Theology is a positive and ontic science; philosophy is an ontological science—that is the basic opposition between them. "Accordingly, there is no such thing as a Christian philosophy; that is an absolute square circle. On the other hand, there is likewise no such thing as a . . . phenomenological theology" (p. 21).

Philosophy, nonetheless, can assist theology, although it need not. Theology needs the philosophic method and philosophical concepts in order to attain its status as science. In faith one's pre-Christian ontological existence is "sublated" (*aufgehoben*). One's ontological knowledge functions as a "co-directive" in forming theological concepts from faith; the category of guilt, for example, signifies the region of Being to which the concept of sin must adhere. Theology's employment of philosophy, however, does not change the nature of philosophy nor does that employment of philosophy "sublate" it, making it an "*ancilla theologiae*." Heidegger offers no evaluation of Christian faith in this essay, although he does so

later. It is one mode of existence; authentic ontological existence is another. He does, however, make this remark: "*Faith* as a specific possibility of existence is in its innermost core the mortal enemy of *the form of existence* which is an essential part of philosophy" (p. 20).

There are many indications that Heidegger in his Marburg days and shortly thereafter wanted to write a theology, i. e., a definitive work on God. But he held back because he then believed that theology, as defined above, should be built upon and follow from ontology. So, while writing his early works, he suspended his desire to do a theology. "Phenomenology and Theology," which dates from that period, is thus not a work about God, but about the relationship between philosophy (ontology) and theology (faith). The properly theological question about the relationship between God and man remains unanswered.

Heidegger progresses from what might be called a Kierkegaardian way of looking at theology to a Nietzschean way. In this stage there are clear statements critical of faith because of its demand for security and certitude (cf. *The Introduction to Metaphysics.*) Heidegger also took from Nietzsche his "Death of God" interpretation of the current age which Hölderlin reaffirmed for him. Sartre's assertion that Heidegger was an atheist stems from his familiarity with Heidegger at this stage. Heidegger's mature thinking about God derives almost entirely from his careful meditations on Hölderlin's poetry. Heidegger's major essays about poetry appear in translation as *Poetry, Language, and Thought.* These essays contain a well thought out, consistent statement about the divine and man's relationship to it. But Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's and Rilke's poetic discussions about God emphasizes that in our own age the divine is absent. Hence the appropriate human role in our destitute time occupies Heidegger's thoughts in this work. This perspective on Heidegger is, for the most part, lacking in *The Piety of Thinking.* Yet if any thinking is pious, poetry must be.

2. The second article translated in this work is a letter, "A Non-Objectifying Thinking and Speaking," contributed to a conference at Drew University in 1964. Heidegger had hoped to attend but could not and sent the letter instead. The conference was to be a dialogue about the relevance of Heidegger's thinking for theology. Another such dialogue occurring in 1953 appears in this work as an appendix: "Conversation with Martin Heidegger, Recorded by Hermann Noack." Together these works give a glimpse of Heidegger's mature position on theology, a position noticeably different from that of "Phenomenology and Theology."

The theologians with whom Heidegger enters into dialogue have become convinced of the inadequacy of traditional metaphysical language to elucidate their Christian faith. Heidegger's thinking has a great appeal to

them as a way of transforming theology. Thus Bultmann, Barth, Ott, and others find Heidegger's thinking an improvement over traditional philosophers for use in theology. Especially appealing are Heidegger's characterizations of man (*Dasein*), history, language, and, for some, the relationship between Being and *Dasein* as an analogue of the relationship between God and man.

Heidegger's position and that of the theologians, however, are basically at odds, though the opposition is not dealt with in any thematic way. Heidegger believes that Being has manifested itself in various ways in the course of history. Some of these disclosures have included the "presencing" of gods which have been spoken in a non-objectifying way by poets. The presence of Jesus and the scriptural (poetic) response to him are only one example. But the poets Hölderlin and Nietzsche are poets for our day. Their message is that this is the age of the absence of the divine, the death of God. Since, in Heidegger's view, there are no eternal truths, Jesus *was* God; the death of God indicates that the Christian truths have lost their viability, their applicability. Heidegger remains silent in the absence of the divine, awaiting a new poetic disclosure of the divine. "What are Poets for?" begins with a clear statement about "This time of Need" and the "default of God."

Heidegger believes theology to be metaphysical. In response to revelation, traditional theologians have opted for a metaphysical God (God as *causa sui*), a metaphysical notion of man, and have restated the scriptures in metaphysical language. Theologians did not respond to the Christian revelation with ritual singing and dancing; they were not content with the mythic/poetic words of scripture; the history of theology is a history of continuing attempts to restate the message of the scriptures in the philosophical idiom of the day—this despite the continued protests of people like Saints Paul and Bernard, Cardinal Tempier, and Kierkegaard and Heidegger.

The new theologians want to transform theology into a non-traditional form; they want a non-metaphysical theology. The metaphysical god who is the otherworldly ground of beings must be rejected. The ethics dependent on this God, the "creature" ethic, must give way as must the concept of an eternal human nature. Despite these radical notions and more, Heidegger, who is sympathetic to their task, nonetheless feels it is misguided. From his perspective, theology remains metaphysical because its language and task is metaphysical. The task of theology is to restate, to re-present, the mythic words of scripture in the language of philosophy, a language of objective truth. Insofar as theology remains *fides quaerens intellectum* its motivation or will is the same as that of western philosophy. Both attempt to secure truths in language. Both want to get at final and unchanging answers. Finally, both assume that there are eternally true

answers and that philosophical statements can secure these truths. This is more than a will for truth; it is a will for certitude. Theologians are not satisfied with scripture; they want Christian doctrine. Philosophical concepts and language hold out this prospect to the theologians. Thus theology is metaphysical because its language is metaphysical; its language is metaphysical because the desire for certitude is metaphysical. Theology cannot extricate itself from metaphysics and remain theology.

The employment of Heidegger's thinking and language, which are not metaphysical, in service of a metaphysical quest must have frustrated Heidegger while, at the same time, it flattered him. Hints of that emotional state can be read into these two essays.

The commentators on this work are puzzled by remarks of Heidegger's quoted by Jean Beaufret (p. 184, note 8) in which he affirms that he is inclined to write his own theology. "But if this is Heidegger's position, what is the kind of theology toward which he is inclined?" (p. 197, note 60). When Heidegger uses the word "theology" in his later writings, he consistently means the interpretation of faith which translates scripture into representational language. Heidegger's inclination is to "theology" in its original sense: "*Theologos, Theologia*, means, first and foremost, the mythico-poetic utterance about the gods, with no reference to any creed or ecclesiastical doctrine" ("The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," p. 54).

Heidegger ends his letter with "an example" of non-objectifying thinking and speaking about the divine—poetry. Poetry is the appropriate language in which the divine is spoken. Poetry, however, is analogous to scripture. Theologians are not analogous to poets; theologians are interpreters and clarifiers, poets say the divine.

Heidegger in his later writings no longer terms himself a philosopher since he then equates western philosophy with metaphysics. He calls himself a thinker. In *Poetry, Language* and *Thought*, Heidegger describes the essential relationship between the poet and the thinker. The poet speaks the divine word (or the absence of the divine); the thinker preserves the word, cares for it, cherishes it, fosters it. The thinker, if he speaks, does not interpret the word but speaks his meditations upon it. In this time of the absence of God, thinking is a watching for, a vigilance. "I do not deny God. I state his absence. My philosophy is a waiting for God." (*Partisan Review*, April 1948, p. 511, as cited on p. 194, note 29.)

To summarize, Heidegger believes that the task of theology commits it to metaphysical language. The philosophical interpretation of scripture must remain metaphysical. The interpretation is a transformation; scripture becomes metaphysical when it is translated into representational language. In "Conversation with Martin Heidegger" he suggests that the theologians abandon that task and that language. Since the Protestant

theologians are not prepared to abandon their faith, the unstated suggestion is that they abandon theology, i. e., their conceptual interpretations, for the role of scripture scholar. In that role they would preserve the scriptural meaning rather than transform it. But that would mean a preservation of the original myths, a preservation of inconsistencies and contradictions. It would involve a denial of the desire, so strong since Augustine and Anselm, to intellectualize the faith and form it into a doctrine. It is this desire for certainty that separates the theologians from Heidegger.

3. *The Piety of Thinking* contains two other essays, a " Review of Ernst Cassirer's *Mythical Thought* " and a 1958 essay entitled " Principles of Thinking." Neither has been translated into English to date. The translation of the very early review of Cassirer's *Mythical Thought* reveals the early Heidegger at work in an area of concern. Heidegger and Cassirer had a shared interest at this time. Cassirer reviewed *Kant and The Problem of Metaphysics* and the fourth German edition contains " A Discussion between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger." Heidegger's basic criticism is aimed at Cassirer's Neo-Kantian orientation; he has failed to achieve a radical analysis of *Dasein* in the light of the problem of Being—a not surprising criticism given the fact that the *Kantbuch* and *Being and Time* are written in response to the Neo-Kantian prohibition of Ontology.

4. " Principles of Thinking " focuses on Hegel's dialectic " as the highest dimension of thought in the history of metaphysics " (p. 49). At this time, Heidegger had already " overcome " metaphysics. This version, then, is a sympathetic rendering of Hegel, but the essay presents very little of Heidegger's own notion of *Thought*, and contributes little to the theological theme of the book. Heidegger gives us a sympathetic rendering of Hegel from the perspective of the overcoming of metaphysics, but the interpretation considered here concentrates disproportionately on Hegel's dialectic.

The Piety of Thinking thus contains four essays and a recorded conversation. Three of these pieces have to do with theology; the other two do not. The translators tell us that the collection is unified by the title they have given it, which occurs in Heidegger's statement: " For questioning is the piety of thinking." Piety and questioning refer to an obedient listening which precedes and guides questioning. In that sense all of Heidegger's later thinking is " pious," and certainly all his thinking is questioning.

5. The reader will see, however, that the largest segment of this book is devoted to a " Translators' Commentary " which attempts an overview of Heidegger on the matters of faith, theology, God, and related concepts. Clearly, the translators are familiar with Heidegger's work and provide

information about him both here and in their Notes. However, the Commentary is flawed. Hart and Maraldo do not take seriously enough the difference in perspective between the early and the late Heidegger. On the question of faith and theology this shift in viewpoint is all-important. Heidegger had deep religious roots. The son of a sexton, he became a novice in the Society of Jesus. At Marburg he was labeled a Catholic Phenomenologist. Theological questions and studies concerned him, but he was principally occupied with the question of Being.

Kant stood in Heidegger's way. Kant had shown the impossibility of doing metaphysics—part of which was theology. The German universities were then dominated by Neo-Kantianism. Heidegger had to take up Kant's problems; he had to show how metaphysics is possible. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* and *Being and Time* are a Critique of Pure Reason which succeeds at the task of demonstrating the possibility of ontological knowledge by means of a phenomenological analysis of *Dasein*. Thus the tasks of phenomenology, fundamental ontology, ontology itself, and theology are, as "Phenomenology and Theology" points out, all joined together. The essay "Phenomenology and Theology" must be seen in this light; it is a very early work of Heidegger. Heidegger's stance in the essay demonstrates his uncertainty and hesitancy.

Heidegger "overcomes" metaphysics; he gets over his early desire to pose the question of Being as an ontological one. Thus the early context in which theology, God, and faith were thought is seen as inadequate. Hart and Maraldo consistently interpret Heidegger as an "eidetic phenomenologist" and often describe the question of Being as an ontological one. In a sense it could be argued that Heidegger's late work on poetry utilizes a hermeneutical approach and is thus phenomenological; Heidegger hints at that in the concluding words of "My Way to Phenomenology." But in a number of other places Heidegger writes what are almost retractions which mention phenomenology among the things he wished to retract. Heidegger "overcomes" his own phenomenological and ontological beginnings because he later came to understand that they impeded his quest for Being. The early writings were too subjective; Being is a concept in *Being and Time*, a way of grasping beings. Being is ontological knowledge in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, again a way of grasping beings. The original part of *What is Metaphysics?* defines metaphysics in the traditional way, a way of grasping the totality of beings. Husserlian phenomenology is radically subjectivistic; Heidegger differs with Husserl especially on this point. But even Heidegger's early employment of phenomenology has *Dasein* appropriating the presencing of Being. Being is the ground concept, that by means of which beings are to be grasped—this is what ontology is about.

The overcoming of metaphysics means getting over (*Verwinden*) the

desire to grasp beings, to think Being as ground concept, to employ phenomenology in service of a fundamental ontology. Positively it means that Heidegger will let Being speak and the thinker will attend to the voice of Being. It is ironic that the translators entitled this work *The Piety of Thinking* and then cast Heidegger in his early and impious phase as an "eidetic phenomenologist."

Only later did Heidegger decide what he would mean by metaphysics and by theology. Metaphysics names thinking about beings. Theology is a part of metaphysics which thinks God as the ground of beings. Metaphysics itself is a will to truth, a will to master the totality of beings in thought. The theological notion of God makes metaphysics possible by providing the first cause of beings. This means that Heidegger's earlier occupation with metaphysics, with theology, has been set aside. One of the most important reasons is that the metaphysical enterprise is not pious enough—it is a will to power, grasping and calculating. In an essay entitled *Die Kehre*, Heidegger characterizes metaphysical/technological knowledge as *Gestell*; a knowing which projects in advance the realm of meaning in which things can be known. Heidegger is reaffirming Nietzsche's view on metaphysics. Metaphysics is not knowledge for its own sake, as Aristotle claimed; it is rather a way in which man gains mastery over the totality of beings. The metaphysical concept of God as first cause is an essential part of metaphysics, explaining why beings are, what they are, and how it is that men can know them.

Heidegger's later thinking is characterized by *Gelassenheit*, by a letting be, a will-lessness. Chesterton described the difference between the two attitudes in *Orthodoxy*; it is the difference between putting the heavens in your head or your head in the heavens. As in Zen, this emptying out of will, the cessation of calculation, is the preparatory step that attunes one to truth as a revealment. Man must first be attuned to the call of being; only then can one begin to think and speak, i. e., respond to Being in language.

Heidegger feels that we are unprepared to think Being and to make pronouncements about the divine. "The dimension for the gods and God only comes into appearance when, first after a long preparation, Being itself has been cleared and been experienced in its truth" ("Letter on Humanism," p. 286). This is the theme of the essay, "What are Poets for?". There Heidegger describes at length the appropriate human response to this destitute age. It is pointedly anti-theological.

In the past, there have been occasions when the holiness of Being was responded to with divine names. Heidegger cites three such historic revelations of the divine in "the world of the Greeks, in prophetic Judaism, in the preaching of Jesus" ("The Thing," p. 184). But for us, Heidegger feels these revelations are no longer viable. The poet Hölderlin, in a pas-

sage which Heidegger made famous, describes our situation. "It is the time of the gods that have fled and of the God that is coming. It is the time of *need*, because it lies under a double lack and a double Not: the No-more of the gods that have fled and the Not-yet of the God that is coming" ("Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry," p. 289). Heidegger also cites Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God to make the same point.

This is a profane age in which the absence of the divine is intensely felt. Being has withheld the presence of the divine from us; we, on our part, are unprepared for that presence. We, nonetheless, desire the divine presence; we want to be religious. Heidegger cautions us, however, not to seek satisfaction of that want by clinging to the gods that are no longer. Silence is the proper response to the absence of God. But it is an expectant silence; this is at once a time of need and a time of preparation.

Heidegger is suggesting that our age is similar to the age of Socrates and Aristophanes when old gods were nearing death. Both periods evidence a loss of meaning, a homelessness, a decline of traditional values. Heidegger assumes that Being will again become meaningful when poets arise who will mythically or symbolically give meaning to Being by naming gods. In the interim, Heidegger feels, we should silently dwell within the emptiness of the absence of the divine. Heidegger waits watchfully for the epiphany of the God promised by the Poet.

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Theological Investigations. Volume XIV: *Ecclesiology, Questions in the Church, the Church in the World.* By KARL RAHNER. Translated by David Bourke. New York: The Seabury Press, A Crossroad Book, 1976. Pp. 342. $12.95.

This volume contains nineteen disparate essays on contemporary Church questions, the results of lectures and papers delivered by Karl Rahner during the years 1969-1971. Parenthetical numbers below refer respectively to these essays.

The first set of seven essays is pastoral in its intent and deals with uncertainties about faith and ecclesiastical discipline which Catholics experience today. Changeable and unchangeable factors of dogma, ethics, the structure of the Church are difficult to identify in the concrete, and thus conflict arises; but the only point for a Christian to wonder about

is that the unchangeable element endures in the new forms and is opportune for meeting the questions of the day (1). Heresy, being cut off from the Church because of doctrine, is still a possibility in the Church today; but pluralism of ideas which are incapable of a synthesis is a fact of modern life which calls for the individual Christian to develop attitudes toward the official teachings of the Church: Rahner gives a set of guidelines for developing a Christian attitude toward the Church's teaching for today (2). Indirectly Rahner addresses Hans Küng's book *Unfehlbar? —eine Anfrage,* through a complex and difficult study of "ultimate certainties," both those offered by human trust and the meaningfulness of existence and those which come from belief in Jesus Christ and the acceptance of the Church's teaching (3). A more concrete article considers the concept of infallibility in the Catholic ecclesiology in historical perspective: its relatively late definition, the likelihood of future definitions of dogma, how the dogma itself has progressed since 1870, i.e. it has come of age (4). A burning and rather caustic defense of a 1967 document of the German Bishops which treated among other things the non-infallible teaching office in the Church reminds us of the pettiness and intrigue which still associate themselves with ecclesiastical enterprise (5). The nature and function of the Roman Congregation of the Faith and its relation to the newly formed Commission of Theologians is outlined in a paper which Rahner delivered at the first session of the International Papal Commission of Theologians, October 6, 1969, the outline of problems and topics for the Commission to treat is still topical (6). Finally, there is a reflection upon the right of a local synod to take up pastoral problems for the benefit of the national grouping and to pass positive legislation (7).

The first seven essays are of historical value. They highlight the theological and pastoral problems of the last decade in Germany as bishops and faithful adjust to new ideas and the developing local national hierarchy. They show how a respected theologian in the last years of his teaching career can respond with vigor to what he perceives to be excesses on the part of either theologians or ecclesiastical authorities. As theological pieces they do not break new ground and are not likely to be of lasting value. For the most part Rahner is applying principles already developed in other writings of his corpus. The lessons learned from these studies of the German ecclesiatical scene do not translate so easily into the Church situation in the United States of the late 1970's.

The second part of Volume XIV contains six substantial articles of lasting value and universal appeal. The first, which appeared in *Worship* 47 (May 1973), 5, pp. 274-284, shows the convergence of contemporary Protestant and Catholic approaches to word and sacrament and to the problems of the institution of the sacraments by Christ (8). An intro-

duction to the "Tractatus de Sacramentis" of St. Thomas Aquinas highlights the strengths (sign genus, anthropological base) and the limitations (no ecclesiology, thirteenth century worldview) of the *Summa Theologiae*, III, 60-65 (9). Rahner employs his "Copernican" approach, i. e. sacramental event moves from an isolated encounter with God to a situation in which the whole life of a Christian brings the sacrament to its fulness, in order to explore the active role of a person, minister and/or recipient of the sacraments; this renders a highly original view of the way in which grace is manifest and received in the sacraments (10). The doctrinal grounds on which Jesus can be said to have founded the Church and willed to found the episcopal office set the limits for describing in what sense the episcopal office might be seen as collegial, re-organizable according to human determinations (11). From a doctrinal study of the priesthood (presbyterate) as coming from the *jus divinum*, leadership of the community emerges as the starting point for a series of applications for ministry today: specialized ministry, part-time, "for a limited time," presbyterial collegium (12). Finally, the interplay of the personal and communal aspects of spirituality and work in religious orders is studied against the background of the Society of Jesus and the differences of age and individual preference (13).

The six essays on sacramental and ministerial questions manifest the solid historical and doctrinal grounds from which Rahner sets out to solve ecclesial problems. One finds a synthesis of the best contemporary opinion on the foundation of the Church and the ministry by Jesus and in the early years of the mission of the apostles and their successors. A thread which runs through all of these studies is need for Catholic theology to develop a theology of word which is commensurate with our sacramental doctrine.

The third part of Volume XIV touches upon topics of the Church as it reaches outside itself.. Ecumenical theology, which admittedly has not progressed to practical results, is tied to problems of hope and the future, wherein Protestant and Catholic theologians face together the problems of secularization, atheism, pluralism of ideas, etc. (14). Specifically, ecumenical theology in the future should enter into dialogue with the world, and do this in cooperative, non-competitive ways among the Churches. Non-theological aspects for study such as development of society and structures of society East and West, language differences; the awareness in all Churches of Christians who are not members active in a Church community; the possibility of one Church—all these need exploration (15). A short essay describes the unreadiness of the modern world to accept poverty, even voluntary poverty (16). He returns again to the topic of "anonymous Christian" to defend and clarify the use of the term (17). A "radical horizontalism" is at work in the Church which threatens to

change her commission to worship God into a simple function of bringing salvation and humanization to the world; Rahner examines the causes behind the movement and points to a new relationship between what is horizontal and vertical in Christian life in our day (18). And finally, a presentation to the International Commission of Theologians (1970) sets some limits to a theology of revelation for bringing about social change and describes the Church's responsibilities in pointing out and defending human rights (19).

The essays of the third part of this book struggle with the Church's responsibilities and opportunities to work for the development of peoples. The dogmatic theologian is challenged to clarify the meaning of the salvation which the Church is to offer to mankind in a world in which science has replaced God as the effective cause in bringing about good things. The limited success of these articles in describing the function of the Church in these matters points to the limitations of dogmatic theology in solving concrete problems of the day. If the dogmatic theologian can give the basis for Christian solutions, he must nevertheless cooperate with experts in other disciplines to find the complete and workable answers.

The intersection of ecclesiology, sacramentology, and secularity continues to be an area of complex problems. Dogmatic theology needs to find the areas which are fundamental to the solution of problems. This is a pastoral service which dogmatic theologians are called upon to render at various levels of the local, national, and universal Church. There is evidence everywhere in the Catholic Church today that authorities are seeking every opportunity to open up dialogue with theologians and scholars of all disciplines. But the problems require patient study and cooperation of all. Karl Rahner is an example of a scholarly theologian who has endured long and painful service in the Church he loves. This set of essays offers a model to a new generation of theologians who would put dogma at the pastoral service of the Church.

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Experience of the Spirit. Edited by P. Huizing and W. Bassett. *Healing and the Spirit.* Edited by G. Combet and L. Fabre. Vol. 99 of Concilium series. New York: Seabury Press, 1976. $4.95.

This small *Festschrift,* presented to Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, is in two parts. The first, and longer, on

" Experience of the Spirit " has contributions from many of the best-known theologians of our day; the second on " Healing and the Spirit " has shorter articles by lesser-known authors.

J.-P. Jossua appears to answer affirmatively the question in his title " Theology, Charism of the Spirit? " Hardly touching the important topic of the role of the Spirit in doing theology, Jossua notes the community context of all intellectual activity carried on in Christ according to the New Testament, and presents such activity as both a gift of the Spirit and a form of service. Jossua asks far more questions than he attempts to answer.

Piet Schoonenberg on " Baptism with the Holy Spirit " is a useful addition to the theological literature on this topic. He studies the New Testament and then contemporary experience in the Pentecostal movement. The former, summarized in the phrase " the glorified Christ baptizes with Holy Spirit," identifies five elements common to all biblical accounts of receiving the Spirit: repletion (full-filling); forming part of our conscious and identifiable experience; affecting the body; being for the Body of Christ, the Church; gifts for the journey. Schoonenberg, unusually for a Catholic author, makes no attempt to relate Baptism with Holy Spirit to the sacraments of initiation: this makes it less apologetic and may indirectly have promoted its creative character. In the second part, Schoonenberg relates the distinction sometimes made by classical Pentecostals between "the Spirit with " and " the Spirit in " to stages in prayer growth and sees as distinct the zones of the human touched respectively by charismata and by the acquisition of the virtues. Schoonenberg's modest contact with charismatics makes this less magisterial, though his position on the possibility of direct experience of God has developed from his book *The Christ* (cf. pp. 43-44) to " not only mediated by others but is also given unmediated to a person, for him to mediate " (p. 34).

Karl Rahner's essay " Experience of the Spirit and Existential Decision " proposes the thesis that transcendental spiritual experience is always bound up with particular " categorical " objects of choice, and appears to take a more minimalist view of the possibility of knowing God's particular will than Part III of his earlier book, *The Dynamic Element in the Church.* Yves Congar examines the traditional explanations of the unforgiveable sin against the Holy Spirit and opts for post-pentecostal attribution to evil of the work and presence of God (the same sin being open to forgiveness before Pentecost). Langdon Gilkey, the only Protestant contributor, argues for the creative role of deviant theological positions and the partial relative character of all theological and dogmatic statements. It does not obviously belong under " Experience of the Spirit."

Bernard Lonergan adumbrates the distinction between the mission of the Son and the mission of the Spirit, relating these to *fides ex auditu* (of

the Word) and *fides ex infusione* (of the Spirit). This appears to imply too great a separation between the two missions, producing too rational a view of *fides ex auditu* and too esoteric a view of *fides ex infusione*.

Hans Küng gives a brilliantly succinct analysis of "Confirmation as the Completion of Baptism", raising all the pertinent issues about this thorny topic in twenty pages, easily the lengthiest essay in the book. When it comes to practical pastoral policy, Küng attempts to have it both ways, asserting that confirmation must be "a freely acknowledged, self-responsible, publicly confessed decision of the young person" (p. 93) in language suggesting youthful maturity, but later recommending "the early years of school (before admission to the Eucharist). . . . a stage of uncomplicated openness" (p. 97) with a reference to the Gospel presentation of the child as an exemplar of faith.

The section on healing makes more evident what is less sharply seen in the first part, namely the theoretical level of treatment and the lack of empirical analysis. It is strange that a volume on experience should contain less by way of sociological and psychological studies than the average volume in the Concilium series. More surprising still is the absence of any study of discernment of spirits; less surprising perhaps but no more justifiable is the lack of mention of experience of evil spirits. The healing section has nothing on the role of healing in the history of the Church and is virtually restricted, as Floristan admits, to "Christian experience and therapy" as part of the dialogue between psychoanalysis and theology (cf. p. 104). All the essays on healing are from Continental Europe and none refer to the extensive pioneering work on faith and healing in the English-speaking world. Combet and Fabre's article on "The Pentecostal Movement and the Gift of Healing" is very general and lacks a feel for the difficulties and intricacies of this topic, ignoring the key questions, such as God's will to heal, methods of inner healing, and the relationship between healing and evangelism.

All in all, a disappointing book and, in the healing section, seriously inadequate.

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Introduction to Aristotle's Theory of Being as Being. By WERNER MARX. Translated by Robert S. Schines. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977. Original German edition, *Einführung in Aristoteles Theorie vom Seienden.* Freiburg im Breisgau, 1972.

This small volume is an important study of the concept of being as being in Aristotle, a concept which Marx regards as "the foundation of traditional

philosophy" (ix). The word *Introduction* in the title is misleading since this is not a study easily grasped by beginning students, nor does it present an unprejudiced view of the concept. Rather it is a carefully written argument for a specific view of Aristotle's theory of being as being.

Philosophy today, according to Marx, finds itself "between tradition and another beginning," a view which he developed in his book entitled *Reason and World: Between Tradition and Another Beginning* (The Hague: 1972). He believes that through the reconsideration of basic elements of traditional philosophy, specifically Aristotle's, there may arise a new philosophical foundation. The *Introduction to Aristotle's Theory of Being as Being* is divided into three parts. Part One, entitled "Knowledge, Science and Philosophical Theory," is a study of the nature of knowledge as developed by Aristotle, chiefly in Book Gamma of the *Metaphysics*. Part Two analyzes the concept of *ousia* (substance) in Books Zeta, Eta, and Theta, and arrives at the conclusion that Aristotle's ontology is an ousiology. Part Three examines the relation of this ousiology to theology. According to Marx there are three possible positions: (1) Aristotle's metaphysics is simply ontology; (2) it is simply theology; (3) it is both ontology and theology. In Part Three he briefly presents the conclusions of Natorp, Jaeger, Heidegger, Merlan, Owens, Patzig, Boeder, Düding, Mansion, Aubenque, and Wagner as to the theological character of being as being. No references are made to G. E. R. Lloyd, John Herman Randall, Jr., Henry B. Veatch, G. R. G. Mure, and Marjorie Grene, each of whom had something to say on this matter. Marx's argument is that Aristotle's metaphysics is both ontology and theology. He admits that Aristotle was not a "builder of systems," yet he says this "does not prohibit us from pointing out a connection when one emerges from a train of thought by necessity, particularly when it then opens a horizon for exegetical investigations. When the fundamental concepts of ousiology are thought through to the end, a connection becomes apparent between Aristotle's ontology and his theology. Thus, on these grounds, one can assert with great probability that God as the cause of everything else also is one of the 'principles and causes' of the 'one, certain nature' which must be investigated by the theoretician" (pp. 57-8). My suggestion is that one read Part Three first, and then turn to Parts One and Two to follow the argument leading to the conclusion.

My general criticism of Marx's treatment of Aristotle is that, despite his claim "that Aristotle's philosophy is not 'systematic' in the modern sense, but aporetic" (p. 57), and that "the thought of the philosophers is characterized by question and aporia, by dialectic deliberation and refutation, by probing many possible solutions to a problem" (p. 11), he does not stress that skeptical nature in his presentation of Aristotle's thought. He is not the only one to examine the Aristotelian opera like a proof-texting fundamentalist.

Such studies of Aristotle miss the philosopher who aired difficulties rather than developed positive doctrines, who adventured with ideas rather than pontificated ultimate truths. Aristotle, as we all know but sometimes forget, never wrote a book called the *Metaphysics*. What we call the *Metaphysics* is " a series of independent, shorter writings which were first brought together into one work by later editors " (p. ix, footnote 1). Many of these writings focus on the concept of substance, but as Lloyd says,"... it is doubtful whether Aristotle means to propose a single, clear-cut and definite conception of substance " (*Aristotle, The Growth and Structure of His Thought*, p. 51). Book Zeta, in which he has the most to say about substance, is in fact a wandering, confusing tangle of trials and errors culminating in the strange conclusion that, whatever substance is, it is " that which is compounded out of something so that the whole is one, not like a heap but like a syllable " (1041 a 12). This is the ending of the long arguments and snatches of arguments of Book Zeta. Whatever substance is, it is a putting together of anything so that it resembles a syllable like *ba* which is some more than *b* plus *a*. Substance is not like a *soros* (literally a pile of corn). This, I think, is humor. Aristotle's humor may be hard to find, but beware the commentator who fails to see it. Or again take Book Lambda, chap. 9, upon which students over the centuries have puzzled. Here he is airing difficulties rather than developing positive doctrines. He raises six questions, and offers six " answers." (1) Why does the divine reason think of something? Because if it did not think of something it would be like a sleeping being—and where is the dignity in that? (2) Why cannot the divine reason think of something outside itself? Because it would be dependent on something else—and then it would not be the best thing. (3) What does the divine reason think about? It must be a thinking upon its own activity of thinking—whatever that means! (4) But how can there be a thinking on thinking? Well, the divine reason has no matter, so it will just have to be its own " matter." (5) Does thinking or being thought of give reason its goodness? It will have to do so in any case in which the act of thinking and the object of thinking are identical. (6) But is divine thought a composite? It can't be since there is no matter, and everything which has no matter is indivisible. Anyone who misses the Aristotelian fun in this chapter is too somber to understand the Aristotle who joyed in the pursuit of ideas.

Aristotelians have sometimes been divided into those who regard Book Zeta as the keystone of the Metaphysics and those who confer that honor on Book Lambda. Marx accepts the view that Lambda was written before Zeta (p. 57), yet he holds to the Lambda point of view. Perhaps a better touchstone for classifying Aristotelians is in terms of the use they make of the concept of the unmoved mover as developed in the *Physics*. Surely no-one, from an analysis of the *Physics*, would conclude that " the

unmoved mover is the cause and keystone of the entire universe" (p. 13). The unmoved mover of the *Physics* is that which avoids an infinite regression of moved movers. Randall, by paying almost exclusive attention to the *Physics*, decides that the unmoved mover is natural law; Marx, by neglecting the *Physics*, makes the unmoved mover, not the cause of motion, but the cause of the entire universe. I have in print expressed my rejection of Randall's position (see "Randall's Interpretation of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, October 1962). Now I reject Marx's position. When will we fully recognize the aporetic nature of Aristotle's thought?

Part One seems to be propaedeutic to the possibility of knowing God as being qua being by making a distinction between perception, which "has its object outside itself," and thinking, whose "object is something thinkable, something intelligible, to this extent always already with itself" (p. 5). How can this view of thought be harmonized with Aristotle's ladder of knowledge developed in *Metaphysics*, Book Alpha, Chap. 1, in which knowledge is rooted in experience, memory, and sense perception? Also how can this view be squared with *Posterior Analytics*, II, 19, in which the "true universal" is fashioned from the "rudimentary universal," and the "rudimentary" or "earliest universal" from sense perception? Aristotle does, of course, say that divine thought is a thinking on thinking, but this appears in *Metaphysics*, Book Lambda, Chap. 9, in which, as I have indicated above, Aristotle seems to be airing difficulties rather than developing positive doctrines. It is also true that in Chapter 7 of this same book he refers to God as a principle (1072 b 14), a living being (1072 b 28), and a substance (1073 a 3). We must not ignore Chapter 8 with its reference to fifty-five unmoved movers, and his reference to myths of the gods as "relics of the ancient treasure" (1074 b 13).

From Part Two I select but one sentence for analysis: "Aristotle's decisive thought which was to supersede the Platonic *chorismos*, the dualism of intransient idea and transient being, so that an essence which is intransient and apart from all becoming, and in this sense 'eternal', is present in concrete Being, in the transient *synholon*" (p. 29). I cannot understand why he finds Aristotle's "decisive thought" in an essence present in "concrete Being" (N. B. upper case B). This seems to be a clear violation of Aristotle's refutation of Platonic Idealism in *Metaphysics*, Book Alpha, Chap. 9. To add a "concrete Being" to the realm of being, as Aristotle bluntly and humorously says, is "as if a man who wanted to count things thought he would not be able to do it while they were few, but tried to count them when he had added to their number" (990 b 2-5). Being as being, as conceived by Marx, does this. It adds Being to beings. In Book Lambda itself Aristotle says the same thing: "The universal causes, then, of which we spoke do not exist. For it is the individual that

is the originative principle of the individuals. For while man is the originative principle of man universally, there is no universal man" (1071 a 19-22). First philosophy studies the generic thatness of things, being as being; and this is "a science of all things" (992 b 28), or "the principles and the causes of things that are, and obviously of them qua being" (1025 b 1). To be for Plato was to have the characteristics of unchangingness, eternity, purity, perfection, absoluteness, etc. All else is an imitation of Being. But Aristotle finds that to be means to be an object of speech, an object of thought, and the subject of change. As he says in 1025 b 20, "if the divine is present anywhere, it is present in things of this sort." Does not the locating of being as being in a God—a Being as being—commit the greatest of all sins against Aristotle—the sin of *choris*, of postulating an Entity which in some sense dwells apart from the substances, "a one over many" (990 b 8)?

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BOOKS RECEIVED

Cambridge University Press: *A Theory of Universals* by D. M. Armstrong. Pp. 149; $16.95. *Aristotle's Concept of Dialectic* by J. D. Evans. Pp. 150; $12.95.

Columbia University Press: *Hermeneutics and Social Science* by Zygmunt Bauman. Pp. 263; $15.00.

Cornell University Press: *Boethius's De topicis differentiis*, translated with notes and essays on the text, by Eleonore Stump. Pp. 272; $18.50.

Fortress Press: *Meaning in Texts* by Edgar V. McKnight. Pp. 332; $19.95.

Gruner: *The Problem of the Contingency of the World in Husserl's Phenomenology* by Sang-ki Kim. Pp. 102; $12.95.

Harvard University Press: *Art and the Christian Intelligence in St. Augustine* by Robert J. O'Connell, S. J. Pp. 251; $16.50.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press: *The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas* by Thomas McCarthy. Pp. 466; $19.95.

Mouton: *Structure and Creativity in Religion* by Douglas Allen. Pp. 288; $24.50.

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